PARTISAN REVIEW

PR

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1940

LIONEL TRILLING
Parrington, Mr. Smith and Reality

VICTOR SERGE
Conquered City

NICOLAS CALAS
On Revolutionary Sadism

G. L. K. MORRIS
4,000 Years of Picasso

M. G. WHITE
From Marx to Dewey

LONDON AND PARIS LETTERS

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POETRY AND CRITICISM BY HORACE GREGORY, ELISEO VIVAS, BERTRAM D. WOLFE, RANDALL JARRELL, BABETTE DEUTSCH, GORDON SYLANDER, GEORGE WOODCOCK, LE GARDE S. DOUGHTY.

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Conquered City

Victor Serge

I.

THE LONG NIGHTS seemed to leave the city reluctantly, for only a few hours. The gray of dawn or of twilight filtered through the soiled white ceiling of the clouds and shone on everything like the thin reflection of a distant glacier. Even the snow, which continued to fall, was without light. That white shroud, soft and silent, extended endlessly in space and time. The street lamps had to be lit by three o'clock. Evening heightened the snow's colors—ash-white, opaque, blue, the patient gray of old stones. Night imposed itself, inexorable and calm, unreal. In the shadows, the delta regained its geographical configuration. Black stony cliffs, cut up in right angles, bordered the choked canals. A sullen phosphorescence rose from the frozen river.

At times the northern winds from Spitzbergen, or from still further, from Greenland, perhaps, perhaps from the Pole across the Arctic, Norway, and the White Sea, swept over the dreary banks of the Neva. The cold suddenly bit into the granite, the heavy fogs from the Baltic and the south suddenly disappeared, and the rocks, the earth, the bare trees, were instantly covered with crystals of frost, each one a scarcely perceptible marvel of numbers, lines of force, and whiteness. The night's appearance changed, shedding its veils of unreality. The Pole Star was visible; the constellations revealed the immensity of the universe. The next day the bronze cavaliers on their stone pedestals, covered with a silver powder, seemed to have issued from a strange masquerade; the high granite columns of St. Isaac's cathedral, from its pediment peopled by saints up to the massive golden cupola, was completely frosted. The red granite facades and wharves took on, under this magnificent veneer, tints of rose and white ash. The gardens, with the pure filigree of their branches, seemed enchanted. That fantasy delighted peoples' eyes as they stepped from their stifling houses, just as when, a thousand years before, men dressed in furs ventured out

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timorously in winter from their warm caves full of a good animal smell.

Not one light in entire sections of the city. Prehistoric shadows.

People lived in houses of glacial cold. Each livable corner was like an animal's lair: the ancestral stench penetrated the skins of the furs which they never took off or which they wore in order to go into the next room to tear wood from the floor to keep the fire going: — or to get a book: — or to empty the filth accumulated during the night on frozen piles of dung, these too covered by the delightful frost of which each crystal was a marvel of purity. The cold came in unhindered through broken window-panes.

The city, divided by large straight arteries and winding canals, surrounded by islands, by cemeteries, by great and empty terminals, extended to the end of a narrow gulf, enclosed in a white solitude.

(But the nights reigned, unreal or starry, implacable and calm; and during these nights, skiers, armed with large Mauser pistols, carrying fifty pretty pointed bullets, a flask of whiskey, two kilos of black bread, twenty pieces of sugar, a Danish passport in good order, a hundred dollars sewn into the lining of their trousers, entered resolutely, with huge strides, that desert where nothing was worse than to encounter a man; and women, clutching their children by the hand, old men, cowards, all bowed under the great wind of terror, more deadly even than the winds of the Pole, also came into this desert of ice, led by traitors and spies, moved by hate and fear, hiding their jewels, as convicts hide their money in prisons, in the private, filthy folds of their flesh.)

Seen from high up, from the red-starred aeroplane, which flew slowly over it in the mornings, the Neva was like a slender white serpent, shooting toward the desert an opened jaw from which darted two thin bluish tongues.

The people left in the suburbs were hungry. No more smoke rose from the factory chimneys: and when, by chance, one sent up smoke, the women, muffled in rags, gathered together at the door of a communal store, watched, with dejected curiosity, as the strange clouds rose. "They're repairing guns there. They receive a special ration there. . . . How much? How much?—400 grams of bread a day, yes, but there's none for us, it's only there for

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them. We know who they are, the dirty. . . ."

Blackened red flags hung at the doors of old blood-red palaces, built by the master, Bartolomeo Rastrelli, who had been much taken with the elegancies of 18th century Italian architecture, graceful and beribboned as shepherdesses. They had housed empresses' favorites, conquerors from Taurida and the Caucasus, great nobles, masters over thousands of serfs, imbeciles, schemers, and thieves, whom the Secret Chancellery had tortured for a day before deporting to the eastern forests. When the guides of the Board of Political Education spoke to the simple people who had come to the capital to attend the governing congress, they told them those were the works of the architect Rastrelli. The visitors naturally understood this to mean that they were "the works of a man who had been shot," for shot in Russian is *rastrellany*. The more austere hotels and palaces of Napoleonic days, with their lofty pediments resting on powerful columns, had the same red rags at their doors. The various stages of the Empire were thus symbolized on the avenues of imposing structures which made one think, at night, of the tombs of the Pharaohs of a Theban dynasty. But the ashes of this dynasty lay fresh in a turf-pit of the Urals; and these tombs, the tombs of an empire in fact, bore the inscription:

P.C.R.(b). COMMITTEE OF THE SECOND DISTRICT: — R.S.F.S.R. PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, BUREAU OF EDUCATION OF BACKWARD CHILDREN; — R.S.F.S.R. SCHOOL OF THE RED COMMANDERS OF THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' ARMY. In these palaces, dead because they were conquered, uncrowned because they were no longer palaces, work was being done. In the vestibules, often in the shadow of great stuffed bears which had once held plates for visiting cards, machine guns squatted like beasts of steel, mute but ready to bite. Typewriters resounded with their dry clatter in rooms intended for princely comforts; a worn-out conqueror, comrade Ryjik, slept in his boots, on the same divan, in the same Louis Quinze study, where eighteen months before, an old epicure of the august race of the Ruriks, entertained himself by viewing naked young girls with a fascinated despair. Now that epicure was stretched out somewhere, in an ammunition box, naked, his beard unkempt, bullet-holes through both temples, rest-

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ing under a half-metre of shovelled earth, a metre of snow, and the nameless weight of eternity.

On the first floor, committees filed their folders in boudoirs divided by white-wood partitions; rows of odd-sized mattresses, garnered in the requisitioning, were placed on the floors of the great gold and white salons, transforming them into dormitories. Enormous crystal chandeliers tinkled faintly to the passing of trucks. Humiliated prisoners who, perhaps, had once ascended the marble stairs of that very mansion with dignity, faced by the impassive regard of lackeys in café-au-lait livery, now awaited their transfer to the Extraordinary Commission in the cellar. From time to time, the guard nonchalantly resting his arms on a filthy table, at the entrance to the stair which led to the cellar, got up, regretfully shouldered his rifle, which he carried with the barrel pointed down to the ground, and unlocked the prison door.

"Let's go," he said without malice, "Bankers to the latrines! in threes!"

He pushed the fat bodies ahead of him with familiarity. They jostled against each other on the narrow stair, then hesitated a moment in the courtyard, faced by the shining snow. . . . Snores came from the detachment of the guard stationed in the ancient kitchens.

II.

The previous year, before the Austrian socialist had betrayed two revolutions, the former Chevalier Gardes Street had been called, for a time, Frederick Adler Street. There were only a few who knew its present name, Street of the Barricades, crushed beneath a century's usage of the old name. Number 12 was a tall, commonplace house, with dilapidated courts, overlaid with the melancholy gray of old houses. There, for sixty years, the gentle-born had lived out their routine: honoring the saints, eating well, sleeping under warm eiderdown quilts. Money flowed in steadily,

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from farms, factories, forgotten offices, in thin, underground, sewer-like streams. A blue enamel plaque, fastened above the carriage entrance read: *Property of the Society of Real Estate Insurance.* One December evening, a sailor from the *Vautour* had come, by order of the Soviet of the Second District, to fasten underneath it, on the door, with four tacks, a hand-written notice bearing the stamp of the Committee for the Poor, "*. . . is declared the property of the state. . . .*" Shady traffickers in outmoded coats, who prowled about the consulates, and were supplied with land titles as outdated as the seignorial titles of the 16th century, would resell this house every two weeks in the restaurants of Helsingfors; a good price was still being given for it, but in Tzarist roubles, which were in circulation only among smugglers and traitors.

On the ground floor, the bevelled plate-glass windows of a shop, covered now with a mixture of dust and frost, concealed the tarnished mirrors within. *Celine, Paris Fashions.* These words, in rounded gilt letters, ended with a fine flourish, widening toward the end. Water-stained draperies hung over the nickel rods, designed to show off the latest models from the Rue de la Paix. A Jewish family lived there. Sometimes, when a corner of the curtain was lifted, one could get a glimpse of a dark, graceful, wild little thing of about eight years, rocking to sleep an amazing rag doll with a wonderfully painted face. In the morning, an old man would come out; under the hunting cap which he wore, one could make out only the large drooping profile, the flabby cheeks and rheumy eyes. He would go to sell Lord knows what at some market.

The other shop window, not long ago a shoemaker's, now served a forlorn grocery: saccharine in little tubes, tea made from flowers, packed almost like the genuine Kouznetzov teas, coffee of some unidentified bean. Some potatoes, sprouting where they lay on a porcelain plate, attracted the eye like some rare, out of season fruit. What phantom trade went on under the sheltering shadows of these wares? The sailor from the *Vautour* spoke to the Committee for the Poor about breaking into this store, which surely must be filled with stolen sugar and flour. But the secretary of the Committee, a busy little man, with a powerful jaw and a limp, who claimed to have been wounded in the Carpathian mountains, but who was certainly lying, calmed the sailor without appearing to, with the assurance that he was keeping an eye on "that really

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suspicious shop."

In the morning one sometimes saw a very old man in a gray overcoat sweeping away the snow in the courtyard; and when another old man, in an astrakhan cap, a black portfolio under his arm, passed by hastily, with his jerky gait, the two old men would exchange a long angry look. The Secret Councillor did not forgive the True Councillor of the State for having entered the service of "these bandits" in an office governed by a positively illiterate brute. They would also meet at the communal store where both of them went for their bread ration. The Secret Councillor, classed in the 4th category (non-workers) would slowly wrap his 50 grams of black bread in a cloth that looked like a dirty handkerchief; he would wait until the other, that affected scoundrel in the 3rd category (intellectual workers), had received his ration, twice as much as his own, to let him see, from his sneer—which he imagined full of irony, with what contempt this reward for treason inspired him; but his ugly toothless grin, although it was intended to express scorn, did not at all alter the woeful expression on his jowled face, and the look which he cast on the True Councillor's ration was full, not of severity, but of dull animal covetousness.

Punctually at nine o'clock, the True Councillor of State presented himself . . . ah! what a staff! . . . to the district superintendent. He found no one there except the old woman who cleaned the offices. The staff always arrived late, and the head of the department later than anyone else. When he had looked through the newspapers, with deep sighs, the True Councillor opened his folders: *Municipal Properties Buildings for Demolition* (*Wood for Fuel*) . . . Towards noon, the chief, a blond, thickset fellow, with a rough peasant face, had tea, brewed from carrot parings, brought him, and signed the papers. Since he could puzzle out handwriting only with the greatest difficulty—and all wrong, at that—they had to read aloud to him the suggestions written in red ink on the margins of the typewritten reports. He rarely disapproved, then no doubt only when paid to do so. Almost always, he signed with an appearance of dissatisfaction.

"House in good condition," the True Councillor said quietly, standing, full of deference, beside the directorial armchair. "Lodging for twelve persons. To be torn down in pursuance of the order."

"I do my duty," he would sometimes say in the evening to his

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neighbor, Andre Vassilievitch. "I serve my country. A government, even of madmen and bandits, is still my country; and the people who submit to it get only what they deserve. . . . We are tearing down the city, my friend. We are creating a pretty housing crisis . . . but a pretty one! When this whole business is finished, I tell you that the value of real estate will be tripled. . . ."

He was the best appraiser in the district.

. . . . . .

The house was interested in the new-born baby in apartment 15. He issued from a weakened womb in a cold maternity ward. Born because his parents had not known how to prevent it in time, he had already been living stubbornly for weeks, against all expectations. Under old fur robes, he breathed the ammonia-like stench of his urinations. He sucked implacably at the drained breast of a woman with a deathlike radiance of profile, who said to her visitors, opening her large, slightly crossed eyes to gaze on her joy:

"He's still living, he's still living! Can you imagine that! . . ."

They could only marvel at this triumph of tenacity.

People brought logs, grain, and oil for the lamp in number 15. They knew her husband was at the front; the wife of an officer also at the front—but on the other side, so that if the two men met, the one would kill the other, or, if taken prisoner, would be coldly put to death—this woman would bring bread to the mother. These neighbors read together, and with equal anxiety the accounts of towns taken or lost.

A little girl in a red beret still went, every morning, to the School of the Ballet to master the art of toeing and turning. The storm will pass, won't it? the dance will remain; and the little girl is talented. On her way, she read, when she had time, Anderson's fairy tales, and wondered, meanwhile, why not a single flying carpet ever appeared over the roofs of the dismal houses. She also read, carefully, so as to be able to repeat them properly on her return, the pencilled notices at the communal store: "the third category will receive two herrings on coupon 23 of the food card. . . ." How sad life is, without a flying carpet!

Workers, ready to move out at the first alarm, in order not to be murdered in this house in which they felt themselves intruders, lived in the apartment of a lawyer who had disappeared.

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They had made haste to exchange part of the furniture for supplies from thieving farmers and they used the rest for heating the place. Having pried open the strong box with an acetylene torch, they found only torn folders, from which most of the filed documents had been ripped. The gaping hole in the strong box, which had been turned into a pantry, showed behind a large desk on which a Navy Yard lathe-worker kept his tools; when he returned from the factory where he spent most of his time waiting in line for his ration of grain, he made knives from fragments of stolen machinery and later exchanged them for flour. The water pipes, frozen at the beginning of the winter, had burst. The women went down two flights of stairs to fetch water at Professor Lytaev's place; they missed the old warm wooden cottage in the suburbs, lit up in the evenings by the yellow windows of the taverns. "That was the good life," they said, with rancour. "Everything will be broken up, you'll see! A plague on it!" they added.

. . . . . .

A poster announced that the Committee of the Poor would open the tenants' assembly with a lecture on the Paris Commune. The poster showed the Vendome column, in blue, broken in two, collapsing amid scarlet flames; it read: DANCING!!! The lecturer, sent by the Central Club Service, a thin archivist with a small, colorless beard, spoke for an hour without raising his voice, just as a light persistent rain falls.

The poor man discussed the history of "all those political massacres" in a melancholy way suited to the taste of the day. He did so only because the subject was the means of support for him and an ugly wife who suffered from rheumatism. This subject interested him no more than had, not so long ago, his genealogical researches for *nouveaux riches* families. And sometimes he had to restrain himself from coming out of this persistent bad dream, from waking, from interrupting himself to say, in an enlivened voice, his face changed and lightened by twenty years:

". . . but let us pass over these terrible and unprofitable matters. The work of a poet is so much more precious to humanity than all these massacres! Let us speak now of the youth of Pushkin. . . ."

At such moments, he would blink his eyes strangely, like a man dazzled on coming in from the darkness;—he was afraid of

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himself, he searched the audience for some hostile face, to which he could surrender, vanquished; his voice, for no apparent reason, leaping an octave: ". . . the evacuation of the Vanves fortress . . ."

The hall was an old ransacked salon, decorated at each corner by chubby-cheeked angels, in gilt plaster, supporting candelabras, furnished with leather armchairs, pretty, fluted and embroidered boudoir chairs and big grimy wooden benches brought from the neighboring barracks. Here, as everywhere else, there were portraits of the leaders, draped with red ribbon, on the walls. One squinted, with a sly, vaguely cruel expression under his enormous bald forehead, because the photographer, unable to comprehend his real greatness, had sought to give this simple man the head of a statesman as he imagined it ought to be (". . . and it was not easy, I assure you," this old court photographer would repeat, long afterwards.) Another leader shot a brilliant stare into space through his eyeglasses, and the head, in spite of his pleasing smile and the ironical combination of full lips, a thick moustache and a beard like a great comma, made one think of strict orders, telegrams announcing victories, proscriptions, riots subdued, of a conquering, exalted and implacable discipline. He had, moreover, rebellious hair, and the soft smile of a well-shaven dictator, a little too fat for these times of famine. There were only about a dozen people in the room, but a good wood fire made the place comfortable this evening. When the lecturer had finished, the sailor from the *Vautour* asked if anyone in the audience had any "questions to put to the reporter." As the time for the dancing neared, the room filled little by little. Heads turned towards the harmonica player sitting near the door, his instrument on his knees. But a soldier, who looked like a big, simple man of the soil, rose heavily from his leather armchair at the back of the room. He muttered, so that everyone was able to hear, in a tone of command:

"Tell us about Dr. Millière's execution."

As he stood listening to the story, massive, his head inclined, so that one could see of his face only the hairy cheeks, the sullen mouth, the forehead ridged and lined, he resembled certain masks of Beethoven.

"Dr. Millière, in a dark blue frock coat and top hat, led in the rain through the streets of Paris, forced to kneel on the steps of the Pantheon, crying 'Long Live Humanity!'—The words of

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a Versailles faction member, leaning on a railing a few steps further on:

"They're going to smash you, out of humanity!"

At the back of the room, couples were becoming impatient. After all, aren't we going to dance?

In the black night of the unlighted street, the simple man of the soil caught up with the lecturer. The sounds of the harmonica died out behind them, caught up by the darkness.

"See here, you must be hungry."

The archivist felt a hard package thrust into his hands.

"These are English biscuits that I brought back from Onéga. Those buffoons, that rabble back there—they're not like us."

The archivist took the biscuits. "Thanks. So you come from Onéga?" It was said out of politeness. Onéga, Erivan, Kamchatka —it mattered little. But the man from Onéga had a secret on the tip of his tongue. His momentary silence was tense.

"I was also in the Perm government last year when the Kulaks rose in revolt. They tore open the bellies of the food commissars and filled them with grain.

"On the way I was reading Arnold's pamphlet: *The Dead of the Commune.* A fine essay! I thought of Millière. And I avenged Millière, citizen! It was one of the few beautiful days of my life. Step by step I avenged him. On the threshold of the church I shot down the biggest landowner in the district, just the way they did him. I don't remember his name any more, and I don't give a damn. . . ."

He added after a short silence:

"But it was I who cried: 'Long Live Humanity!' "

"You know," said the archivist, "Millière, fundamentally, was not a true communist. He was no more than a bourgeois republican."

"It's all the same to me," replied the man from Onéga.

III.

One had to walk for some time along the corridors of the University to come, finally, upon the room where, on certain

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evenings, Professor Vadime Mikhailovitch Lytaev still gave his lectures. The place might have been in the heart of some forsaken monastery in a city of another time. Night and cold penetrated even here. Night lay heavily, in hard rectangles, upon the frost-ferned windows. The Blackboard seemed to be a gulf opening out on the night. The professor kept his coat on; his students had entreated him not to take his hat off, so that his noble head, on which the white locks of hair mingled with the grey, might not be too helplessly exposed to the icy shadows ready to leap upon men. The students, also in their overcoats, sat listening, benumbed with cold. From behind his desk, poorly lighted by a green reflector lamp, (the only light there was here), the professor could make out no more than a dozen indistinct shapes from which emerged, in a kind of fog, the outlines of faces. His was a little more discernible. He was an old man of about sixty years, slender, erect. and strong. His cheeks were hollow, his lips like parchment. Wrinkles encircled his eyes, which, when lowered, were those of the figure of an ascetic, and when raised, were revealed as caressingly dark. One noticed the delicacy of the straight nose despite the prominence of the bony structure, the regularity of the mouth, the graying, neglected beard; taken together, they made up one of those faces, sombre of countenance, luminous of expression, that the icon painters of Novgorod used to give to their saints; not that they were particularly faithful to a mystic type, but more probably derived them from the stylized types in some very ancient Greek portraits.

The professor spoke, with an intensity that was almost concealed by his assurance, of the reform of Peter the First. Henceforth, it would be necessary to speak of Peter the First instead of Peter the Great. More often Lytaev simply said Peter, which affirmed the man of power in the prodigious tsar. His lecture ended, Vadime Mikhailovitch Lytaev stepped into a night as vast as any in the past. He followed a path on the frozen Neva, crossing the broad river obliquely in the direction of the Winter Palace. Parfenov generally accompanied him, since they both lived in the center of town. Parfenov walked in step beside the master, absolutely silent, as if he did not exist. Shod in felt boots, wrapped in a reindeer skin, on his head a reindeer cap with long ear-laps which came down to his chest, his face heavy, without distinct contours,

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he was no more than a shadow, massive yet nimble. From a distance, he looked like a bear.

A light icy mist obscured the moonlight, permitting only an intense, grey, diffused phosphorescence to pierce through. A limitless landscape stretched away from the middle of the Neva. On the two circular banks, as on the edge of a lunar crater, the façades of the palaces shaded off in dull, soft blacks, like the colorless radiance of the bottom of the sea. A little to the right, behind the high granite rampart of the quay, in the center of a square bordered with columns, a bronze giant, his horse rearing on the top of a rock, was unseeingly crushing to earth a serpent, also of bronze. His hand was stretched out toward the sea, the north, the pole. The face was Peter's, large, forceful, with a small insignificant moustache.

Vadime Mikhailovitch carried his scholar's ration, received at the University, after two hours of tedious waiting among the other academicians: one pound of herrings, one pound of oatmeal, two pounds of millet, and two boxes of second rate cigarettes. He readjusted the straps of the sack which were cutting his shoulders and said:

"Look, Parfenov. We were born out of our time. Night on the river has been like this for centuries. Centuries will pass and night will be the same. Some two hundred and twenty years ago, even before Peter had come, five thatched log huts, somewhere along this bank, were carried away. Seven men—for only the males were counted—with their women and their little ones, toiled here. Seven men, come, like their unknown ancestors, from the east. That village was called Ienissari."

"But Peter came," said Parfenov. "And now we have come. How happy men will be in a hundred years! Sometimes, when I think of it, my head whirls! In fifty years, in twenty years, in ten years, perhaps,—yes! give us ten years and you'll see!—the cold, the night, everything . . . (Everything?—what did he mean by this word, vague, but vaster than the cold or the night?) . . . everything will be conquered."

They walked for a moment in silence. The other bank came imperceptibly nearer.

What an enthusiast Parfenov is! Lytaev smiled in the darkness at the myths which have swayed men throughout history.

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"Parfenov, you are right to believe in the future. It is the new God, a reincarnation of the oldest deities, who makes the present bearable. I believe in it also, but in another way, because the future is a spiral without end . . . are you happy at the factory, Parfenov?"

"Ah, no! I've had enough of it already. Vadime Mikhailovitch, I am preparing to leave you. I have asked to go to the front; the secretary of the district is backing me; it will go through."

He felt the need to talk. And Lytaev listened with a kind of confused joy to this young male voice, poured out impetuously in the rude slang of the day. The walk on the ice through the darkness, in the midst of this solitude, gave these two men an understanding of one another beyond the strict meaning of their words.

"The factory? . . . We take a week to produce as much as we did in a day last year. I had to start having the workers searched again on their way out; they steal everything. They came around to call me names: 'Policeman! Aren't you ashamed! . . . You yourself protested against the search in '17; "an indignity" you called it! But you just wait, commissar, your turn will come. . . .' The worst of it is, the search doesn't help much. They throw tied up packages through the windows. The women carry off yarn between their legs, and linings wound around their bodies. I can hardly tell the porters to feel their buttocks! They defy me!"

Lytaev replied gently:

"They must live, Parfenov."

"Yes, that's the worst of it. So they steal. They make slippers out of the jacket cloth and sell them at the market for 40 roubles. The workers must certainly live, but the revolution must not perish. When I say that to them, some of them answer: 'Isn't it making us perish?' Some of them have no conscience at all, Vadime Mikhailovitch."

"And it is with this blind force that you would transform the world, Parfenov?"

"With them and for them. Otherwise, they will never be human beings. In spite of them, if necessary. 'Policeman?' I said to them, 'All right, I'm not afraid of words. Insult me as much as you please, I am your comrade and your brother, perhaps I'm here just for that; but I will defend what belongs to the republic against you. If someone must perish, I want to perish, with you,

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provided the revolution lives' . . ."

"Do they understand you, Parfenov?"

Parfenov reflected.

"How can anyone tell? It seems to me that they hate me. It seems to me that they could kill me. On the walls of the toilets they wrote that I am Jewish, and my real name Yankel Schmoulevitch. And there's nothing to be done against the stealing because it is the hands of hunger that steal. But underneath their hatred, I believe they understand me, they know I'm right; that's why they haven't beaten me up yet, I, who go home alone every evening. . . ."

. . . . . .

The main entrance of the house had been closed for months, for precaution's sake. Lytaev went in through the gate of the carriage-entrance. An old woman, standing her turn as guard, stared at him in the dark. He did not notice that she responded to his greeting with only a nod of determined dignity, because she disapproved of such an estimable man consenting to teach under a reign of gangsters. Having crossed the court, Lytaev climbed, groping his way, up a narrow stairway which smelled of mould and filth, and knocked decisively at the double door of what was obviously a kitchen. He had to identify himself before the servant drew the iron bolt and safety chain on the inside.

"It's I, Agrafena, I . . ."

A pleasant warmth filled the study, where their lives now centred about the iron stove and the kerosene lamp. For thirty years, the same feminine face had been turned up to Vadime Mikhailovitch at the quiet hour of midnight tea, before retiring; he had seen this face bloom with the full radiance of life, then wane, fade, give way, without losing its clear gaze, the only youthfulness which persists; he knew this face so well that he forgot it, looked at it without seeing it, rediscovered it in his memory sometimes with helpless astonishment. . . . Here we are, old. . . . What is it, then, what is life?—The same hands, at first slender, the nails polished and too rosy, the hands he had compared to flowers and which, afterwards, he had covered with kisses, grown, little by little discolored, worn, slightly coarsened, with a yellowish tinge . . . the same hands set before him the same silver. The same voice, imperceptibly changed like the hands, spoke to him of the day that had passed. This evening the hands set down, in the lighted circle,

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black bread cut in thin slices, and pickled herring; they pushed forward the sugar bowl in which the sugar had been thriftily crumbled into little bits. The voice said:

"Vadime, we will have butter. They promised me fourteen pounds of it in exchange for the Scotch plaid."

A far, fleeting image flashed into the two minds, so distant, so swift, that they did not remark on it to themselves, or each other; the image of a couple in a blue carriage, the Scotch plaid on their knees; and the white peaks, the fir-trees, the torrents, the green valleys strewn with bell towers, the feudal villages of the Tyrol, had flown just as had youth and life.

"Vadime, they searched the Stahl's house last night and took a gold chronometer. . . . Vadime, Pelagueya Alexandrovna has received a letter saying that her son was killed at Bougoulma. . . . Vadime, milk is up to thirty roubles. . . . Vadime, the pains in my back are beginning again."

Vadime listened to these remarks, always of the same order, and gave himself over to a kind of melancholy well-being. This warmth was certain, and that other life, that other part of his life, immensely irrelevant, though very near at hand. He answered what he had to answer, gently, absentmindedly, but with an air of attentiveness. Relieved of the day's burdens, he felt his usual restlessness coming on.

"Thank you, Marie," he said, as he had said thirty years before, but in a wholly different way. "I am going to work for a while." Having carried the lamp behind the screen which set off his corner of the room, he bent over a book opened to no purpose, and drew out one of the old envelopes, the backs of which he used for making notes, and set himself to sketching patiently such geometric designs as the Arab artists liked, childish profiles, bits of landscapes, and animal silhouettes. The same temptation to sketch faces of women with enormously long lashes always returned to him in these moments of meditation; but he suppressed it with some shame, not really knowing whether the shame was for the temptation or for himself for not yielding. . . . He remained so for an hour, face to face with his own thoughts, which no longer expressed themselves in words, but were like those of a blind man shut up in a strangely shaped room, more anxiety than thoughts.

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It was a different anxiety which prompted the voice from the shadows behind him.

"Vadime, you ought to go to bed. You tire yourself out too much. The stove has gone out."

"Yes, my dear."

The cold began to penetrate his stiff limbs. He undressed slowly, thoughtfully, blew out the lamp, crawled shivering between the sheets and stretched out "as if for eternity." And it was here that clear phrases arose in his mind, ordering themselves in sentences which would make excellent fragments of articles. "The death rate in Petrograd this year was greater than in the Punjab during the great plague of 1907!!!" "The great reform of Peter the First appeared to some of the best minds of old Russia to inaugurate the reign of the Antichrist. . . ." ". . . at the death of Peter the First, the empire was depopulated. . . ." But no, that wasn't it. History explained nothing. Must one, in order to understand, think less, know less? Were things much more simple than they seemed? Title for a work: *The Decline of the Roman Empire.* What could be more clear? No explanation. What was there to explain? *The Decline of Christian Civilization.* No, not *Christian, European.* That was no more exact. *Decline of Capitalist Civilization.* If the newspapers told the truth, if one should believe the posters in the streets, the speeches at the meetings, if . . . ?

He thought of Parfenov, asleep at this hour on some chance couch, not far from there, in some unknown house, certain of man's greatness in ten years, twenty years, providing this necessary night was endured. "They do not know history, but they make it . . . but what are they making, what are they making?"

(*Translated by Gertrude Buckman*)

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Randall Jarrell

A NURSERY RHYME

Here we are: the Bowl, the thousands,
This is the team we've got to beat.
They're warming up. But something's wrong.
You feel it? No? Then take a seat.

They're using a shift I haven't seen.
What are the rooters yelling?
Things have a look I hardly like.
Perhaps we should go. You're still not willing?

Then destiny must have blinded you.
For behind you, in their sallow lines,
The noosed ones cough; a foot from your face
The carrot-haired barber halts and grins;

The orphan laterals the warden's head
To a manic who gains eleven yards,
Runs to the stands and assaults a nurse,
Is beaten to shreds by the fretting guards;

First down: the giant from the criminal side
Cuts the umpire half in two with a cleaver,
Is clipped by the badly demented passer
Who finds he's lost his last receiver;

The frothing thousands yell *Water! Water!*
Rain bottles and bombs on the cartwheeling leaders,
The racing-plane with the kidnapped star
Is down in flames in Section R;

The ravished Scout—no, not today.
Let's stop pretending it's Judgment Day.
Because each of you knows as well as I
What it is I'm trying to say;

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The spinster who's never attended a seance
As well as this year's Conference quarter,
The crystal-gazer in an Arkansas tent
Spells it in dreams to the great reporter;

While you're eating peanuts or loving Aquinas
It sticks to you like the back of your head;
The bill's presented before you're born,
Marked *Payment Still Deferred* when you're dead;

I could call it Love—but whoever liked it?
A Star—it's enlightened no one yet;
The puzzle that you and I and the cat
Are the answers to—and wrong at that;

The riddle that no one has even posed,
That you were never made for solving;
That you slash or finger until you feel
Your wits, your wife, and your world dissolving;

So say what you like, do what you please,
It's not important except to you—
The ones who can satisfy the conditions
Are other and odder and after you.

THE REFUGEES

In the shabby train no seat is vacant.
The child in the ripped mask
Sprawls undisturbed in the waste
Of the smashed compartment. Is their calm extravagant?
They had faces and lives like you. What was it they possessed
That they were willing to trade for this?

The dried blood sparkles along the mask
Of the child who yesterday possessed
A country welcomer than this.
Did he? All night through the waste

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The train moves silently. The faces are vacant.
Have none of them found the cost extravagant?

How could they? They gave what they possessed.
Here all the purses are vacant.
And what else could satisfy the extravagant
Tears and wish of the child but this?
Impose its cancelling terrible mask
On the days and faces and lives they waste?

What else are their lives but a journey to the vacant
Satisfaction of death? And the mask
They wear tonight through their waste
Is death's rehearsal. Is it really extravagant
To read in their faces: What is there that we possessed
That we were unwilling to trade for this?

Gordon Sylander

SONG: YOUNG OEDIPUS AND THE SCARECROW

For Nicolas Calas

Proud eyes that like horses watch
The son play with the hunting-knife,
It was in your grey-walled room
That a scarecrow had his wife.

Proud nose that find ancestor in
The grand dame's portrait on the wall,
A bird caught in her hair and slept
Until there was no hair at all.

Proud ears that hear a thread unwind
And women listen at the door,
An insect leaves your labyrinth:
You have housed a minotaur.

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Proud legs pacing this century
Like a fair distance in a duel,
Some legs will come upon their death
As you walk towards the forest pool.

Proud eyes, proud nose, proud ears, proud legs,
Ride on your horses, the machine
Is unwinding in the human clock,
The time is short, the pool is green.

The son will see the scarecrow now,
The rags will run before the knife,
The bird escape before the rags,
And insect fly for insect's life.

Insect will reach the water's edge,
And bird will dive into the pool,
And son will follow scarecrow down,
And you will die an heirless fool.

George Woodcock

MERTHYRMAWR

Sunday evening. The thick-lipped men binoculared
Steal through the geometric groves of pines,
Observing the steady and fatal hands of poachers
And the young loving in wrinkles of the dunes.

Grey in the wind sand tides against the turrets,
And watchful sight is bridged towards the sea,
Where silent the marram defends a wearing land
And the seagulls climb like Junkers a plaster sky.

The air is alive with voices. The loving whisper,
The rodent scream at neck-constricting hand,
Gulls' earthless wail and dank watchers' laughter.
Always the wind whistles through teeth of sand.

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Night drops on the lovers, marram and voices.
Dark hinders eyes, yet aids the brutal hand.
Watchers depart, but the snares are filling.
Wind dries the blood on the moving sand.

Le Garde S. Doughty

END-WINTER NIGHT SOUTH

Staying late from bed, he gets down on one knee,
Stirs sweet-gum log, brews coffee at fireplace.
He has heard wind slash the less-than-hair-line brace
Of calm latitude across his own rooftree.

Nothing but an acre and this hearth are his—
Besides naturalism—so he bends observant brow
Over pine cone, on the front bricks, burned out white.
It made fierce kindling early in the night,
But looks more like a shrunk magnolia now
Than what it is.

Europe is not on his shoulders, thank God, nor Asia;
Only pollen of althea and acacia.

Tomorrow he'll glance at his neighbor's land, but still
He'll scarcely see his neighbor's plowshare coil
Its gritty screw-threads up the sorry hill,
Or see erosion rhyme neighbor's soul with soil.

He'll snap pine needle, crush it in his mouth;
And add leaf-mold to his sand-top, share-crop South.

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Parrington, Mr. Smith and Reality

Lionel Trilling

WE CAN SCARCELY help thinking a good deal about V. L. Parrington these days. Not that he has ever been neglected—on the contrary, in the years since his three famous volumes appeared they have established themselves in our intellectual life not only by their power but by their generous and spirited humanity. But this year our awareness of Parrington must be especially lively. His publishers have recently brought out a new edition of his work, three volumes in one, far too heavy to read comfortably but, at the lowered price, far easier to own, and this edition came appropriately when interest in American literature, stirred up by all kinds of people but most significantly by the critics of the Left, had reached a point almost too high. The Left, a large part of it committed to the militant Jeffersonian populism which was at the center of Parrington's thought, could find comfort and inspiration in him, and we have recently been given Marxist estimates of his history by Granville Hicks and Bernard Smith. Last, we have Mr. Smith's book, *Forces in American Criticism,** which the publishers, the reviewers and the nature of the book itself speak of as a work begotten by *Main Currents in American Thought.*

Parrington's achievement is known to everyone and there is perhaps no need to write of it at length. Especially in its time and place it was remarkable; in his own eighth chapter Mr. Smith describes accurately, though with that Cato-the-Censor tone which so marks and mars his whole book, the condition of American literary history which prevailed up to the appearance of *Main Currents:* it was not catholic enough in its scholarship, it was largely conventional, but above all it was snobbish not only with the usual genteel prejudices but with the special rigidity that can overtake the literary caste of any social group. Parrington saw that to write a history of the literary successes of America would be to

*Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.

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write a slim book indeed—or an untruthful fat one. A book whose judgments were made according to the critical standards that we use for European letters would not properly represent a great part of the literature of the American people, for to speak of the mass of our past literature as a failure because only a relatively few works or personal canons were still of lively classical interest would be unfair to a literature that had, in its day, done its job. Parrington therefore broadened the conception of letters and used for his criterion not present interest or charm, or technical or philosophic success, but only the standard of historical relevance. He dealt largely, of course, with political treatises, state papers, theological works; in the field of what is usually called literature—what Parrington calls the belletristic, with the touch of disparagement that goes with the word—he included the ephemeral, the local, the technically bad, the deservedly forgotten; the standard was to be not "goodness" or "badness" as the literary critic judges, but the value of the work as an expression of significant conditions and movements in American life.

In addition to this conception of letters—or, rather, preceding and implying it—Parrington had another idea—that culture could be given an economic interpretation. If only because this idea was a cohesive and organizing one, if only, too, because it excited so much opposition in a field of thought where generalization was too much lacking, Parrington's conception of economic determinism was a useful one. But it was useful for an even better reason than these: it could really interpret. While it could not, to be sure, tell us all that we might want to know about either literature or economics—for, despite our modern desire to think so, the translation of one activity into the "terms of" another does not exhaust the possibilities of interpretation—it could tell us much about the important relation between the two.

Parrington's method had its clear limitations and often enough he did not use it well. Sometimes he used it far too simply, sometimes he did not use it at all. One finds it hard entirely to blame him for the lapses; one even suspects that the life of his book comes in part from these very failures. Mr. Hicks points out that Parrington was not always consistent in his use of economic determinism—that he was willing to apply it to his villains, the conservatives, but not to his heroes, the liberals. This is no doubt a

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grave theological error but then it does have the advantage of being the same practical procedure which we use in life—or at least in the intellectual life, which seems to depend upon the fiction that we and our compeers make up our minds and are responsible for our good and bad ideas. Mr. Smith says that Parrington's method of economic interpretation was rather inflexible as compared with the "subtler materialism" of the Marxist method. I cannot help thinking that this judgment does not come with entire good grace from Mr. Smith, who, writing of Whitman, can say, "Therefore the most interesting thing about his estimates of individuals is what they reveal about his social and philosophic ideas. They prove, beyond dispute, that he was a romantic pure and simple. Where his reactions to the eminent romanticists differ in kind and degree from those of other critics, they do not do so because of any vital differences in principle, but because of temperamental differences which were social in origin." This—and the reader will supply his own italics—is being truly inflexible and of what is suggested by such analysis Parrington had no touch. One gets no sense in reading him, as one does get in reading Mr. Smith, that Parrington felt that society was complicated enough without its having human beings in it. One knows that he could never use such language as Professor Harry Hayden Clark used (Mr. Smith quotes it and not for purposes of refutation) when he spoke of the "modern fool-proof historical inquiry and explanation." Parrington knew that the *mens aequa et clara* was one of the rarest of things and he said of himself, ". . . Very likely in my search I have found what I went forth to find, as others have discovered what they were seeking." In other words, he was a sophisticated and in many ways a sensitive man and he did not deceive himself in what he was doing; he never spoke of himself as a scientist and when he made his judgments he was aware that he was a historian and not History.

Parrington was not a great mind; he was not a precise thinker, nor, except when measured by the low eminences about him, an impressive one. Separate Parrington from his admirable central idea and what one has left is a simple, rather usual intelligence, generous but not original; take him even *with* his idea and he is, once his direction is established, rather too predictable to be continuously instructive. But he had what we like to think of as the

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saving salt of the American mind, the sense of the practical, workaday world, of the welter of ordinary, undistinguished things and people, of the tangible, quirky, pigheaded, unrefined elements in life. He knew, what so many literary historians do not know—and his knowledge came into our thought about American literature to freshen it—that ideas and feelings are sparks that fly when the mind meets difficulties.

Yet he had, after all, only a limited sense of what constitutes a "difficulty" and it is this which makes Parrington for many people a not finally interesting thinker. For whenever he was confronted with a work of art that was complex, personal and not literal, that was not, as it were, a public document, Parrington failed. Difficulties that were complicated by personality or expressed in the language of successful art did not seem quite real to him or in the public domain and he was inclined to treat them as aberrations, which is one way of saying what everybody admits, that the weakest part of Parrington's talent was his aesthetic judgment. Mr. Hicks speaks of this weakness with relative severity, atoning, I rather think, for his own past sins, and Mr. Smith says that Parrington's "aesthetic errors of judgment were many." However, Mr. Smith adds, "but time is taking care of them. They are being forgotten." But they are not being forgotten; Mr. Smith, for one, has remembered them only too well; they form the very ground of his book as they form the very ground of the literary ideas of the great mass of quite serious people who, like Mr. Smith, pin their hopes to "the broadest possible democracy." Mr. Smith says too that no one will be harmed by the fantastic praise of Cabell and that Parrington's virtues "reduce to trivia his aesthetic errors of judgment." I am not so sure. Parrington's notorious eulogy of Cabell is of course unimportant; the contempt with which he treated Poe, Hawthorne and Henry James is very important. To dismiss it—or, worse, to follow it in effect if not in detail—is to suggest that the "broadest possible democracy" is but benevolent Philistinism, that it does not imply the greatest number of kinds of people but rather the greatest number of people of one kind thinking the same thing. I cannot help suspecting that Parrington's errors of aesthetic judgment, and Mr. Smith's after him, are important not only to art but to politics.

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II.

What cannot be missed—and what admirers of Parrington insist on missing—is that Parrington's bad judgments of art are not mere lapses of taste; despite such errors as his praise of Cabell, Parrington's taste was by no means bad. His errors are errors of assumption. Parrington was very much a man of the Eighteenth Century; his affinity to the Enlightenment was not limited to his admiration of Jefferson's political theory; it extended to the philosophy which supported the politics. Indeed, one must carry him further back than to Locke, to the psychology and aesthetic of Hobbes. True enough, he does not often deal with philosophical notions explicitly, but whenever he approaches a work of art we can see what—in the technical, non-artistic sense of the word—his aesthetic was. There existed, he believed, a thing called *reality;* he believed that it was one and immutable, that it was irreducible, that it was the starting point and referent of all our thought. Men's minds might waver, but reality was always reliable. And the artist's relation to reality was simple: Fig. 1, Reality; Fig. 2, the Artist; Fig. 1a, the Work of Art. Sometimes the artist spoiled this ideal relation by "turning away from" reality. This was an unscientific thing to do and it resulted in certain fantastic works, unreal and ultimately useless. That there was any other relation possible between the artist and reality than this *give* of reality and this *reception* by the artist (who was rather like a good radio receiving set) did not occur to Parrington.

Now, reality in this view of things, though it is always thoroughly reliable, is always rather sober-sided, even grim. Parrington, a genial man, can understand how the generosity of man's hopes and desires may leap beyond reality; to this excess of hope, desire and energy, to this blindness to the limitations of reality, he can be very tender. It is what he calls *romance* or *romanticism* and it appeals to something in his own nature. The notorious praise of Cabell is Parrington's response not only to Cabell's elegance—for Parrington loved elegance—but also to Cabell's frank avowal of the part which a beneficent self-deception may, and even should, play in the disappointing fact-bound life of man.

The second volume of *Main Currents* is called *The Romantic Revolution in America* and it is natural to expect that the word

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romantic would appear in it rather often. So it does, more often than one can count and seldom with the same meaning, seldom with the sense that the word, though it is scandalously vague as it has been used by the literary historians, is still full of complicated but not wholly pointless ideas, that it involves many contrary but not indefinable things, that it is not merely a suggestive word; much too often Parrington uses the word *romantic* with the word *romance* close at hand—meaning *a* romance in the sense that *Graustark* or *Treasure Island* is a romance—as though it signified chiefly a gay disregard of the limitations of everyday fact. Romance is refusing to heed the counsels of experience (p. iii); it is ebullience (p. iv); it is Utopianism (p. iv); it is individualism (p. vi); it is the extravagant (p. 37); it is the self-deceiving (p. 49—"romantic faith . . . in the beneficent processes of trade and industry:" as held, we ask, by the romantic Adam Smith?); it is the love of the picturesque (p. 49); it is the dream (p. 124); it is the sentimental (p. 192); it is patriotism and then it is cheap (p. 235). It may be used to denote what is not classical, but chiefly it means that which ignores reality (p. ix, p. 136); it is not critical (p. 225, p. 235), though at least once Parrington admits that criticism can sometimes spring from romanticism (p. 229).

Whenever a man with whose ideas he disagrees commands from Parrington a reluctant measure of his respect, the word *romantic* is likely to appear. He does not admire Henry Clay, yet something in Clay is not to be despised: his romanticism—though Clay's romanticism is made equivalent with his inability to "come to grips with reality." Romanticism is thus the venial sin of *Main Currents;* like carnal passion in the *Inferno* it evokes not blame but tender sorrow. But it is also the great and saving virtue which Parrington recognizes. It was shared by the Transcendental reformers he so much admires; it marks two of his most cherished heroes, Jefferson and Emerson—"they were both romantics and their idealism was only a different expression of a common spirit." Parrington held, we might say, two different views of romanticism which indicate two different views of reality; sometimes he speaks of reality in an honorific way, meaning then the ineluctable facts of life with which the mind must cope; but sometimes he speaks of it pejoratively and means the world of established social form; and he speaks of realism in two ways, sometimes as the power of

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dealing intelligently with fact, sometimes as a cold and conservative resistance to idealism.

But there is in *Main Currents* a deadly sin and that is turning away from reality not in the excess of generous feeling, but in what the author believes to be a deficiency of feeling, as in Hawthorne, or out of what amounts to sinful pride, as with Henry James. Take for example the following judgment and explanation of Hawthorne which Parrington constructs with his confusing conception of reality, with his still more confusing conception of realism, with his vague notion of romanticism. There was, he tells us, too much realism in Hawthorne to allow him to give his faith to the Transcendental reformers: "he was too much of a realist to change fashions in creeds," "he remained cold to the revolutionary criticism that was eager to pull down the old temples to make room for nobler." It is this cold realism, keeping Hawthorne from his enthusiastic contemporaries, that alienates Parrington. "Eager souls, mystics and revolutionaries, may propose to refashion the world in accordance with their dreams; but evil remains, and so long as it lurks in the secret places of the heart, Utopia is only the shadow of a dream. And so while the Concord thinkers were proclaiming man to be the indubitable child of God, Hawthorne was critically examining the question of evil as it appeared in the light of his own experience. It was the central fascinating problem of his intellectual life, and in pursuit of a solution he probed curiously into the hidden, furtive recesses of the soul." Parrington's language, one must feel, is touched with disapproval of this enterprise.

Now we might pause to wonder whether Hawthorne's questioning of the naive and often eccentric faiths of the Transcendental reformers was not, on the face of it, a public service, or, failing to be a public service, whether it was not at least an interesting job for an artist. But Mr. Smith would perhaps say, and Parrington certainly implies, that as an artistic job it contributes nothing to advance the "broadest possible democracy." If the broadest possible democracy depends wholly on a fighting faith I suppose they are right. Still, society is after all something that exists at the moment as well as in the future and if one man wants to probe curiously into the hidden furtive recesses of the contemporary soul, the broadest possible democracy, and especially one devoted to reality and science, should allow him to do so without despising

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him. If what Hawthorne did was certainly nothing to build a party on, we ought perhaps to forgive him when we remember that he was only one man and that the future of mankind did not depend on him. But this very fact serves only to irritate Parrington; he believes that part of Hawthorne's literary lack comes from his failure to get around and meet people. Hawthorne could not, we are told, establish contact with the "Yankee reality," and the "substantial world of Puritan reality that Samuel Sewall knew Hawthorne seems scarcely to have been aware of."

To turn from reality might mean to turn to romance, but Hawthorne, Parrington tells us, was romantic "only in a narrow and very special sense." He was not interested in the world of, as it were, practical romance, in the Salem of the clipper ships; he turned away and created—"a romance of ethics." This is not an illuminating phrase but it is a catching one and might be taken to mean that Hawthorne was now in the great tradition of, say, Shakespeare; but we quickly learn that no, Hawthorne had entered a barren field, for, though he himself lived in the present and had all the future to mold, he preferred to find many of his subjects in the past. And we learn too that his romance of ethics is not admirable because it requires the hard, fine pressing of ideas and we are also told that "a romantic uninterested in adventure and afraid of sex is likely to become somewhat graveled for matter." (This liberal-radical test of literature by the baldness of the writer's treatment of Sex! Mr. Smith will apply it to Henry James.) Hawthorne's mind was, in short, a thin one, and Parrington puts in evidence his use of allegory and symbol and the very severity and precision of his art to prove that he suffered from a sadly limited intellect, for so much art could scarcely be needed unless the writer were trying to exploit to the utmost the few poor ideas that he had.

In short, Hawthorne was "forever dealing with shadows, and he knew that he was dealing with shadows." Perhaps so, but shadows are also part of reality and one would not want a world without shadows: it would not even be a "real" world. But we must get beyond Parrington's metaphor. The fact is that Hawthorne was dealing beautifully with realities, with substantial things. The man who could raise those brilliant and serious doubts about the nature and possibility of moral perfection, the man who could keep himself aloof from the "Yankee reality" and who could, as in *The*

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Blithedale Romance, dissent from the orthodoxies of dissent and tell us so much about the nature of radicalism and moral zeal, is dealing exactly with reality in exactly Parrington's sense, if Parrington had but known it.

Yet it is certainly not for the purpose of minimizing Parrington's achievement that I emphasize what is, after all, so small a part of his book and make an issue of what his admirers admit only to forget. The fact is, however, that the issue is not merely an artistic one; it is an issue in the very field in which Parrington has his preeminence. Parrington, it is true, said that he had not set up shop as a literary critic; but it is not exactly a matter of free choice whether or no a cultural historian shall be a literary critic; no matter what his protestations, Parrington had to exercise the critical function. To throw out Poe because he cannot be handled conveniently, to speak of him as a biological sport and quite apart from the main currents is perhaps only a mistake or a mechanical application of a method of economic determinism or an indication of the limits of that method, but it also implies a most inattentive reading of Poe and an insensitivity (which Mr. Smith also shows) to the importance of style in the consideration of culture. To make a great point that Cooper had a romantic (i.e. false) view of his Indians, to speak of Henry James as an escapist, an artist similar to Whistler, a man afraid of stress—this is not merely to be mistaken in artistic judgment; rather, this is to examine without attention and in the light of a special snobbery the documents which are in some ways the most suggestive testimony of what America was and is: and of course to get no answer from them. We need not consider whether or not it is in the best tradition of the democratic intellect to reject such testimony; we can leave out, too, all speculation on whether artists of originality could ever make their way in a world of Parringtons. The more important question that must arise is this: if the author of *Main Currents* rejects these works or misinterprets them, is the picture of America he draws from the works he does accept a picture that we can trust?

I put the question quite seriously. When we come to a disciple of Parrington we shall have another question to ask; Mr. Smith has, as he says, a political ideal in mind—the "broadest possible democracy"—and we can ask whether, with his point of view and Parrington's, it will really be the broadest, and the finest as well as

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the broadest, democracy. But to Parrington himself the question must be different; his book stands now at the center of thought about America and one cannot help wondering if the literary historian who does not have the perception to understand our best artists understands more than our simplest problems.

III.

It took a special and admirable courage in Mr. Smith to conceive and carry out his study of American criticism. Nothing could be more arid than the beginnings of American literary thought, nothing could be more complicated than its development. Yet the difficult job needed doing; as Mr. Smith says, criticism is the link between the art of America and its social forces, and an examination of this relation is bound to be suggestive, if not, as Mr. Smith is too ready to believe, conclusive. Modestly, Mr. Smith puts forth his book as only the sketch for a larger work still to be done, perhaps by some other scholar, but though I cannot judge how much more spadework is needed for a complete study, it seems to me that Mr. Smith has underestimated what he has done. He has given us something a good deal more elaborate than a sketch and I suspect that succeeding scholars will not have much of importance to add. I think, however, that succeeding critics will have much to correct, for sound as is the skeleton of Mr. Smith's work, the critical flesh that he has put on it is in a most precarious condition.

As with Parrington, the errors of Mr. Smith's judgment are not merely errors of taste or of execution. He could put, as he has put, his consideration of Edmund Wilson into a footnote, and give, as he has given, pages of discussion to Michael Gold and Floyd Dell and still not be so wrong as he is. He could believe, as he does believe, that impressionist critics are not critics at all. He could maintain, what might be morally desirable but certainly not historically true, that "the battles of literature must be fought over philosophies, not over styles." He could play the familiar weary game of Jacobins vs. Jacobites and misinterpret, with the faint sound of tumbrils threatening the "aristocrats" who admire it, the whole meaning of Henry James's criticism. And I suppose he could

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even be quite inconsistent with himself and after attacking early critics for making writers toe the mark of utilitarian morality, himself go about with a black book writing down the names of those who do not do their social duty. These are, of course, serious errors; but what is so critically wrong with Mr. Smith's book lies much deeper than they indicate.

Mr. Smith, who likes things to be definite and who scolds Emerson for not being systematic and orderly enough, gives us, in his preface and in his conclusion, the assumptions on which he has proceeded. He believes, he says, in the scientific method generally and the scientific method in literary history so far as it can be used; he is antagonistic to mysticism; he believes in realism; he is biased in favor of the broadest possible democracy. Well, we are all biased in favor of the broadest possible democracy; the question is whether Mr. Smith's other biases support this one.

That Mr. Smith, in asserting his devotion to science, should go out of his way to take a swipe at mysticism leads one to suspect that he is not so much in fear of mysticism itself as he is of a certain kind of science, which, because it is not the science of the Nineteenth Century, he believes to be mystical. He is not, for instance, worried about Plotinus, St. Francis or Mr. Waldo Frank; he goes out of his way to speak well of such mystical fellows as Blake and Shelley. When we find him saying, however, that science is materialistic (p. 92), that science is anti-mystical (p. 93), that mysticism is the pinnacle of individualism (p. 80) and that there is a false theory abroad that one man's notion of reality is as good as another's (p. 186), we begin to suspect that he is making a stand for a conception of science which is no longer held by scientists but which is very useful for political partisans. Mr. Smith, we may be sure, like Parrington but more explicitly, is raising his voice in a cheer for "reality," solid and irrefutable, and for the kind of thought which will stand for no nonsense about "mind."

For in no other way can one account for the righteous indignation Mr. Smith exhibits against, for example, the kind of thought which is contained in Henry James's suggestion that, on the subject of sex, Maupassant and d'Annunzio become after a while less than interesting and less than important because they stay so close to the physical fact itself and never come to find any meanings or values in it. Mr. Smith, resenting this, introduces quite illegiti-

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mately his notions of Henry James's prudery, and wants to know what is wrong with the act itself, isn't sex a Good Thing, and, if it is, what is wrong with just simply representing it all bare of a snobbish cloak of meanings? Things are what they are and nothing else: of so much Mr. Smith is certain. That things are what they mean, that things are what they make us do or what we do with them, Mr. Smith does not want to believe and does not want us to believe, and such a view is, indeed, what he calls mystical as against realistic: he seems to think, what is not at all the case, that it makes every man's ideas at once eccentric and as good as the next man's.

A critic with such a view is at a very great advantage, for all he need do is to examine Fig. 1, cast an eye on Fig. 1a and tell us whether or not they are congruent. If they are not, he can pass his judgment on the artist, Fig. 2. The critic knows what reality is and he can check the work of art by comparing it with reality. But how does this critic know what reality is? Mr. Smith has already given us the answer: by the methods of science applied to literature.

To be sure, everybody speaks—though less now than formerly—of the scientific method in literature. But, really, how much validity has the notion? I certainly have not the courage to debate the meaning of science with Mr. Smith or anyone else, but I do remember that science is usually said to have these characteristic activities: to gather data, to formulate statements about these data, to predict on the basis of these formulations and, sometimes, on the same basis, to control. The conjunction of science and literature was perhaps first made by German philology; here, where classifications can be made and definite connections traced, a kind of science does seem to be at work. But when we come to the use of the same method in such endeavors as literary history, even though the ideal of checked data as complete as possible is the essential equipment of the literary scholar, the "science" involved has already a certain metaphorical flavor. After all, there are only certain things in literature that are indisputable and very few things indeed that are measurable. A spelling, an edition, a date, a form, the length of a line—we can be definite about these, even when incorrect. But a meaning is not indisputable, nor a quality either, and we find ourselves in a realm in which science cannot apply.

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Mr. Smith, for example, wants to establish the degree in which Emerson was a romantic. He assumes first the clear import of the word *romantic* (and rather thinks that it implies progressivism) and the possibility of expressing it in terms of intensity, of measurable quantity. Then he tells us that romantic verse is sensuous; we *might* question what he means by sensuous but we *must* question whether, on any definition of that word, *all* romantic verse is sensuous. Then he implies that metaphysical verse is not sensuous, which is certainly an inacceptable statement. Then we learn that Emerson preferred much metaphysical verse to much romantic verse and that he therefore was only qualifiedly a romantic. Well, even as literary statements go, this happens to be a bad one; but even if it were a more *accurate* statement according to the relatively inexact canons of literary statement, I think it would still not be *scientific.**

But consider further: what did metaphysical verse mean to Emerson? Mr. Smith assumes that it meant exactly what it means to Mr. Smith. Would it not, however, be borrowing one of the virtues of science to remember that the object changes as we change the instrument by which it is observed? Dr. Johnson's Milton is not Professor Arnold's Milton and in connection with Emerson's liking for the metaphysical poets we must remember that though nowadays it is the mark of the "classicist" to like them, it was once the mark of the classicist to dislike them (e.g. Dr. Johnson) and that while some romantic poets (e.g. Wordsworth) disliked them (for Dr. Johnson's reasons, by the way), other romantic poets (e.g. Coleridge) liked them; clearly we cannot be absolute.

But by science in literature Mr. Smith means still more. He means that the study of literature and of society together can give us a certain relation between the two and that each can increase our knowledge of the other. A few years ago this was a rather more pugnacious idea than it is today; today we see that we can scarcely

*One could wish, by the way, that Mr. Smith were a more *accurate* critic. For example, he tells us (p. 3) that moralism was "the essence of Greek criticism": but what of Aristotle who is certainly attacking moralism of the critical theory of *The Republic*, and what of Longinus? He tells us too that Calvinism was not individualistic (p. 80) and that classical society degraded man (p. 80), two very strange notions. We learn that in the Nineteenth Century materialism and science were making themselves felt in philosophy (p. 137) and we can only wonder what Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley and Hume could have been talking about in previous centuries. We are told that science affected "even the academic philosophers"; Mr. Smith says (p. 139) "notably . . . Peirce and William James." All we can say is "*Even* forsooth!" Then we learn that "romance, despite its love for the simple, is usually vague and indefinite" (p. 145); also that Poe, who was absorbed with beauty above everything else (p. 190: and not with ugliness?), "never showed the impress of any style, tendency, or manner that was not romantic" (p. 198): but what of Poe's love of precise ratiocination as shown in his detective and cryptogram stories and in his theory of poetic composition?

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conceive accurately of what we call society without also conceiving of one of its attributes, culture. If we accumulate a great many facts, a great many feelings which we examine carefully, if we are content to admit that we must leave out some things, if we move sensitively and know that we are working by analogy and metaphor, we can indeed make certain formulations about society-and-culture which give us the satisfying sense of comprehending, in an essential unity, a great diversity. We must of course be humble and remember that pasts change, that, for example, there have been many Greeces, and that we, like our ancestors, are making our own past to suit the needs of our own present; but we must not be so humble as to abrogate our right to make our own past. And if we remember that these are our limitations we will be using some of the virtues of science—or the virtues of what, as literary people, we can have our own literary term for: *criticism.* True, this is not science in anything like the full meaning of science; we cannot predict with it, not in any sense which makes prediction worth having; and only by analogy can we say we control with it. But it has its own place and function, its own tests and virtues.

And one more point must be made about the conception of science and literature when one thinks of Mr. Smith's method, and that is the relation of our emotions to our data. The intrusion of our emotions does not make science less scientific; an experiment or an invention or even a formulation is an expression of our desires. But at some point in the scientific process we check our emotions (and certainly if we hold the special view of science that Mr. Smith seems to hold we should not admit that our emotions come into play at all) and it is therefore not a great support of his notion of scientific criticism to find him scolding his facts, to find him indignant because there are strong religous overtones in early American criticism, or annoyed because the early taste was insufficiently nationalistic and too much under the influence of England. And what is even more devastating to Mr. Smith's view is to find him quarrelling with literature for doing what it does do or has done, rather than doing something else.

For example, Mr. Smith discusses three American critics, Longfellow, Hillard and Bryant, who share the view that the purpose of good literature is to take us away from the vexations of ordinary life and soothe us, calm us, give us at least the illusion of

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peace and, at the same time, ennoble the life from which we necessarily and momentarily turn. Now, none of these three men is a great critic, but their common view of literature is an old one and neither ignoble nor undesirable; it does not perhaps carry us very far in the understanding of letters but as a description it is not inaccurate, for, as against the life most of us know, even the most "realistic" work of art is an escape. But in quite violent language Mr. Smith rejects this formulation on two grounds. The first is that the critics have not described what great literature does, though they have indeed, and to deny it is simply to deny the fact; literature, exactly because it is not life but a made thing, provides, even when it is most distressing, an escape in that it gives a sense of order and a sense of control and as such is valuable. And it would seem to me that the critic's job would be to inquire what kind of person one is during the escape and what one is after life has captured one again. The second objection that Mr. Smith makes is that literature *should not* do what his three critics say it does do. What literature *should* do we learn from his judgment of Henry James: "He had no realization that art might lead to action—that by affecting the way men think, art affects their acts. His was a theory of art for the sake of consciousness, and consciousness for its own sake, which is not quite so antagonistic to the theory of art for art's sake as he thought it was. Now, too, we can put our finger on the reason why many people have found no real enlightenment in James's critical essays. Because there was nothing he wanted to fight for besides artistry, because he had no purposes or ends, he did not deal with the ultimate things for which men go to literature." In his *New Republic* review, Mr. Hicks said that Mr. Smith would anger the Jacobites (men who, according to Mr. Smith, think that Henry James is God: their rites are dark); however, let us not stop to question the truth of the summary and, rather, let us examine only the last clause: "the ultimate things for which men go to literature."

Some years ago Max Eastman (a critic whom Mr. Smith mentions but does not discuss) set out to explode the pretensions of all critics and aestheticians by juxtaposing the various contradictory definitions of art they had offered. He found: education, recreation, revelation of God, representation of nature, relief from pain, diffusion of pleasure, compensation for reality, integration of

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reality, propagation of emotion, escape from emotion, embodiment of reason, objectification of will, manifestation of law, liberation from law, organization of attitudes, elevation above attitudes, prophecy, recollection, purification, publicity, propaganda. It is not to the point that Mr. Eastman himself had a *correct* definition to offer; what is relevant is that all the contradictions of Mr. Eastman's list were not contradictions at all, for in the actual living of life and the using of art, each one of these definitions, in one way or another, at one time or another, in one connection or another, has a genuine validity; life is complex enough to make quite meaningless any exclusive statement about the use of art or about the things for which men go to it.

But just such exclusive statements must spring from Mr. Smith's conception of reality and of science. And what does such a conception do to the artist? It does not, perhaps, abolish him but it does degrade him as it degrades all thought. Of Emerson Mr. Smith says, "The divergent tensions within him reflected tensions in the world around him." This is true enough, but consider what follows: "Why *he* more than others was so sensitive to a variety of antagonistic ideas, why he more than others suffered (without really being aware of it) [the parenthesis is worthy of special note] from 'inner conflicts,' are questions which have not yet been answered." But will be answered? This is surely the latent promise of Mr. Smith's sentence and of his notion of science even though he says that the questions "are not directly pertinent to this study, for our interest is not in the individual, but in the limitations of thought confronting that individual to the extent that he was one product of a definite community." I should like to see, not the answers themselves, that would be asking too much, but the *forms* of the answers. And I ask for them not because I want to make the tiresome sentimental gesture that people make when they say the advance of science will rob life of "mystery" and make it antiseptically dull. I ask because I think the answers could not have any significance at all. Any answer would imply that Emerson was not the reality but that something *in* him or *behind* him was.

One cannot escape the impression, in fact, that Mr. Smith is after the perfect man of letters, the artist or the critic who will combine the best features of all artists and critics, the Emerson who will be systematic and orderly (to Mr. Smith these are the

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same) in his thought. He wants the One man of letters; and according to his notion of science and reality he is entitled to ask for him because, if reality is One, the true perception of reality is also One and the perceiver too should be One. Indeed, we must begin to suspect that Mr. Smith carries his materialism to the point of Platonism, rejecting the partial, rejecting "mere opinion," demanding the One, the True and the Good. (He has a chapter against the Beautiful.) It is to this end that we find him attacking individualism (quite confident that there is such a thing in the intellectual life) and denying that there are such things as temperamental differences; their acceptance, he believes, would permit a departure from the reality which is perceived by the Advance-guard of Society.

And so much for the artist and the critic; what about the citizen? The artist and critic, as we know from having been told many times, is only the citizen with his awareness intensified and made professional. Parrington threw out Poe from the main currents, found that Hawthorne and Henry James had betrayed the reality of their nation; Mr. Smith finds failure, failure everywhere —failure because incompleteness, failure because no final formulation, failure because of expressing the time, failure because of not expressing the time: reality again and everywhere betrayed. But if reality is One, then has not the citizen, no less than the artist and critic, betrayed it if he too does not have its perfect picture? If we want the One man of letters do we not also want the One citizen? I am sure that Mr. Smith passionately wants in politics what he thinks will be best for a great many people; I am not sure, however, that this will be the broadest possible democracy.

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On Revolutionary Sadism

Nicolas Calas

Editors' Note: We think our readers will be interested in the following selections from Foyers d'Incendie (*"Hearthstones of Arson"*), *a book of Freudo-Marxist literary and political criticism which was published last year in Paris by Denoel. The author is a young Greek surrealist, a follower of Andre Breton. He prefaces his book with this axiom from Heraclitus: "If you do not expect the unexpected, you will not find it, for it is painful and hard to find."*

I DREAM OF SOME DAY seeing the Louvre at last really modernized. Then its directors will not content themselves with borrowing from a shop across the way a dress dummy's pedestal for the Venus de Milo; they will install a complete system of cunning mechanisms, thanks to which the pictures and the statues will be able to move about freely—advancing, retreating, turning on their axes as slowly as a sun or as rapidly as a child's top; all these metamorphoses will take place in the glow of many-colored light projectors, while regular explosions of strange engines will fill the air with noises and cries of distress.

The Louvre will no longer be a museum, for all the great museums will be nothing more nor less than palaces of dreams. What were the palaces, the Palazzo Vecchio, the Escurial, the Nymphenburg, the Palace of Minos, the Kremlin, the palaces of God, of all the gods of all the ages? It took the bourgeois invasion to kill the palaces—an invasion which, like every other one, understood nothing about the symbols cherished by the conquered. The civilizations died and the palaces were destroyed, but it is better

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to burn them as the Tuileries were burned, than to burn their soul as bourgeois officialdom did in chasing imagination out of them. What the bourgeoisie did not damn, it betrayed: it has made of poetry, prose, it has made of palaces, museums, and of costumes, uniforms.

In madness, the bourgeoisie sees nothing but the strait-jacket; in desire, only the brown or black shirt; in pictures, it understands only the price. The Louvre, once the dream of kings, the dream of an emperor, has become an intellectual safe-deposit box for a society which thinks only in terms of the stock exchange.

Let us overthrow this society, blow up the exchanges, destroy the museums. In the carcasses of temples and palaces let us take over the thrones of kings and gods, on these peaks of the past let us sing a poetry made for everybody!

Passerby! When you walk by the Louvre, remember that the dream, too, must have its own Bastille Day!

DESIRE, IN ITS dialectical progress, has a tendency towards either sadism or masochism, depending on whether the individual adopts a masculine or feminine attitude in his emotional life.

From the standpoint of behavior, the man animated by sadistic tendencies will seek to dominate and transform his environment, while the masochist will want to unloose forces whose only purpose, from the point of view of behavior, would be to make him feel the effect of transformations which he desires his environment to produce upon himself. Thus masochistic aggressivity is developed at the expense of the aggressor's personality, which suffers itself to be transformed, while sadistic aggressivity exists at the expense of the environment. Since the revolutionary seeks to transform his environment, one would expect the revolutionary ethic to have an interest in the adoption of a sadistic tendency. Actually, however, it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish a clean line of demarcation between sadism and masochism. These tendencies never exist in the unconscious independently of one another; they form the two antithetical elements of every desire, which is itself simultaneously pleasure and pain. Thus a work of art may reveal masochistic tendencies in the painter, but by virtue solely of the

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fact that he has painted it, his work attests to a desire to transform his environment. Nurses "born" to their calling are moved by feelings of compassion which are masochistic, but in so much as they try to cure sickness they furnish proof that they too wish to transform their environment.

We must, therefore, distinguish between masochism as the element of an *emotional* complex and masochism as the specific character of a complex of *behavior*. When not only desire but behavior too is dominated by a tendency to self-transformation, the individual is led to the self-destruction of his or her personality. Only in such a case does masochism become a definitely anti-revolutionary force. Thus Sacher Masoch is a masochist in the first sense, which is the emotive, while Rimbaud when he stopped writing, when he diminished the manifestations of his personality, became an example of masochistic behavior in the second sense, for what he lost was all desire to transform; if he had any desire at all left, it was to "commit suicide of the personality" and to cease being a poet.

For a psychology of the unconscious, the difference between sadism and masochism is contained in the antithesis *pleasure-pain*, while for a psychology of behavior the criterion is the antithesis *transformation* and *self-destruction*. Obviously, all emotive masochism *can* become masochism of behavior, but it is only when this actually happens that the qualitative change takes place which brings about a contraction of the personality and often leads to its complete elimination by suicide. Emotive masochism can bring a revolutionary to the point of sacrificing his life. We call him a hero then, for in his desire to transform his environment and to fight for those forces which help transform it, he was not afraid to sacrifice his own person. But if this sacrifice was accomplished in a desire to transform himself—that is, if his act was determined by masochistic behavior—then he has really acted in a counter-revolutionary manner, for he has sacrificed his life for a cause that was not revolutionary, namely, his wish to die.

Revolutionary behavior is always sadistic, since the dominant, so to speak, of its emotive complex is sadistic. Masochistic behavior results from an unfavorable contact with reality, which drives back into masochism the elements forming the emotive complex. Because he cannot transform anything else, the masochist

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transforms himself. It was a collective transformation of this sort that took place in Germany after 1925. Their difficulties, their unfavorable contacts with reality, produced in the parties of the extreme left a masochistic inversion of which fascism took advantage. Hitler, in calling for sadistic behavior, at the same time and without realizing it called for masochistic behavior on the part of the Socialists and the Communists. It is only by this that we can explain how hundreds of thousands of Germans, in spite of the fact that they felt themselves being pushed irresistibly towards the left, did nothing at all to resist Hitler. What they unconsciously asked of the parties of the extreme left was not to lead them to communism, but to lead them to fascism, for in the bottom of their hearts what they wanted was not power, but prison, not to rule, but to suffer.

Hitler incarnates to a greater degree, probably, than any one before him the love of an entire people. In the Third Reich too many men preoccupy themselves with what HE feels, too many men want HIM to love them, too many men want HIM to hate them. Hitler is the synthesis of two contradictory situations, each symbolised by the behavior of two men, two veritably brother enemies, Goering and Thaelmann. As long as Thaelmann endures his sufferings there will be men in Germany who feel themselves obliged to suffer too. It is the terrible example of Christ crucified, of whom St. Paul made a masochistic symbol. To go to prison in order to suffer as much as Thaelmann, and to excite Hitler's hatred, is the pattern of the German Communist psychosis; that of the German fascist phychosis is to serve Hitler as well as Goering does. The antithetical movements of these two social psychoses are complete, and they have made of the Third Reich what it is today: the most dangerous of all centers of the self-destructive forces of humanity.

The reinforcement of the sadistic current where the sadistic dominant already exists, and the reversing of the current in favor of sadism where, as in Germany, the masochistic inversion has occurred—these are perhaps the most pressing of all tasks for those who struggle for a reawakening of revolutionary forces in the heart of the working class. It is sad, but there is no use hiding the facts: the revolutionary of the fascist or Stalinist epoch knows no longer what he should love. The violent desire for a transformation awak-

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ened in his heart by the October Revolution has today turned against himself. This too is the conclusion forced upon one by a reading of Silone's *Bread and Wine*, that most terrible of all indictments, so far as I know, of the moral decay of the masses in Fascist Italy. Economic and political slogans are no longer enough to produce the transformation which the proletariat needs so badly; it is necessary to complement them with affective slogans (*i.e. touching the affectivity of the emotions—translator*). Against fascist love we must oppose revolutionary love, against fascist sadism we can no longer oppose Communist masochism or Social-Democratic humanism.

Revolutionaries should be sadists!

To win over those men whom fascism has enlisted in implacable warfare by appealing to the sado-masochistic element in life, we, in our turn, have to act upon the same emotive centers with means just as direct and just as violent. As the class struggle penetrates deeper and deeper strata of life, emotional conflicts begin to grow violent. If the overthrow of fascism is not to become a vain desire, it will be necessary to mobilize against fascism the totality of man's powers: his physical strength, his economic force, his intellectual acquisitions and his emotive energy.

Fascism, therefore, must be fought with Freudian as well as Marxist weapons. And like fascism, communism will have to call on sadistic and masochistic love. Masochistic tendencies must be excited in the fascist masses, and sadistic tendencies among communists. Sadistic love must be directed against the father, and hatred of the father and of the Führer must be expressed as sadistic love. The masochistic element of the communists' sado-masochistic complex should be turned, not towards another chief, towards a Stalin or a Thorez, but towards the brother. The dialectical antithesis opposes to the father-lover of the fascist, a brother and not simply another Führer. The communist should detest the fascist leader to the point of wanting to exterminate him, and should love his communist brother to the point of self-sacrifice. But we must never forget that the dominant of the revolutionary complex is to be sadistic. This means that hatred of the father should always be stronger than love of the brother, for the desire to transform our environment should be greater than any other. For the fascist, on the contrary, love of the father-lover is stronger than any other

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feeling, since the fascist attitude is feminine and expresses the passion of a woman for her lover.

The emotional behavior of fascism—and this is its strength—finds itself adapted to the historical role which the economic structure of our age allows the bourgeoisie to play. This role is reactionary, and the political and emotional behavior of fascism is already leading man towards a catastrophe. Communists too must adapt their emotional behavior to the exigencies imposed upon them by the historical role they have to play. No transformation of economic life will be possible unless a desire to transform their environment animates revolutionaries. It is an imperious necessity, urgent and pressing, that the proletariat be dominated anew by sadistic behavior.

That which the proletarian loves, does not yet exist; that which he hates, oppresses him. *Comrades, be cruel!*

NOWHERE IS THE FORCE of the opposition offered to the conformist ethic by the revolutionary ethic expressed with greater violence than in love. It is urgent that the forces of revolution be re-trained, that the men of our party become cruel men, yet men who, despite their cruelty, remain capable of being moved and of loving. Sadism should not be created at the expense of the general emotional development. Quite the contrary, we should consider this development an enlarging of the entire personality.

Let the child learn to do more than admire the beauty of flowers and the intelligence of bees; let us show him the pleasure of killing animals! Let him go hunting, let him visit the butcher's, let him enjoy suffering. If we want him to become strong, blood should not frighten him. Since he must hate, since he must suffer, since he will see beings dear to him die of hunger, of pain, of disappointment, let him be trained the better to endure the laws of such a life—the life of a society divided into classes, which is the only society we know and that he will be able to know. It is not for us to teach him to live in peace, if we want to make a fighter out of him. Since so much blood is to flow in life, let him get used to wounds and the taste and the smell of blood. The child ought not to turn his eyes away from life, but should look it in the face! The

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bourgeoisie know what they're about when they give their children soldiers and cannon for toys. Let us do the same, let us give our own children armies of leaden workers, barricades, buses, factories, and an enemy army as horrible as the heart desires, made up of capitalists, preachers and cops. For the child, play should be a game of massacre. Our holidays need no longer be those of the bourgeois calendar; for chocolate Easter eggs let us substitute chocolate guillotines!

Excite desire! Monogamy does not exist yet. After the butcher, the prostitute! It is up to her to give the child a taste, and not a disgust, for love.

The child will not learn to love works of art by visiting museums. What he wants and what his heart appreciates are movies and photographs to excite his senses. The child wants to become a man and tries to identify himself with persons stronger than he, and to him, strength means muscle and sex. He goes to the athletic field and the brothel, for it is there that he can measure his powers. Let us encourage this healthy tendency, let us make him strong. Before he loves, let him learn to love physically. If he shows any inclination, the desire to think and feel, to take for his hero an Einstein, a Picasso, a Stravinsky, a Trotsky, will come to him of its own accord, without his being pushed. Cruel, but not hard, cruel, but sensitive—that is the way we want him to be! He will turn his eyes away from no spectacle then; everywhere he will be one who acts; his influence will be activating; no thought, no feeling, no action will frighten him. His thought will have the vehemence and the passionate content of the most gratuitous act, and his most daring action will have the beauty and clarity of the purest thought. A life rich and clear will indissolubly knit together action and thought.

Then man will conquer!

No extravagance will frighten him, for his thought and his action will always be ready to support each new audacity!

From now on let us teach the child to look straight at madness!

When he wants to read, put in his hands the works best calculated to excite his desire. Show him the succulent dreams, the syrups of passion, the wines of blood, the burning kisses, the moist looks, all that bread of life, that whole body of love!

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RIMBAUD IS NOT the only example of a paranoiac intellect put at the service of reaction (*a reference to Claudel's attempts to capture Rimbaud for the Church—translator*). Marxism is in the same boat. Bernstein's reformism, the reformism of de Man and of Stalin use Marxism to turn it against the proletariat itself, the only social force which is able to bring about the new order. Having falsely interpreted the writings of Marx, reaction has gone on to attack psychoanalysis. Not only Adler and Jung, but even Freud tries to enroll psychoanalysis among the forces of regression. Jung does this consciously in a reactionary spirit, Adler in the petty bourgeois and social-democratic spirit which characterizes his whole attitude, while Freud does it out of weakness. He compensates for his scientific audacity by an astonishing social conformism. One might say that he is frightened by the practical conclusions to which his genius has led him. Morally, Freud expresses the bourgeois attitude, and he seems to want to destroy his own work by appealing to the only power left to reaction today, the power to kill. As if to repay the recognition which the bourgeoisie, after scoffing at him so long, has finally given him, Freud wishes to endow death with a power equal to that of life by raising it to the rank of an instinct. The instinct of death will save Freud, the bourgeois Freud, from his own revolutionary daring. Is it not plain that Freud's moral watchword is: "*si vis vitam para mortem*"?

But we have already said that Freud is only an unconscious reactionary. This is why it has remained for Jung, a conscious reactionary, to do the job of expounding a doctrine of human behavior and a morale which have as their purpose the adaptation of man to death. Jung compares the life of man to the sun's daily course. A rising, a zenith and a setting are discerned. Man reaches his zenith in his fortieth year; that is why it is such a critical age. It makes necessary on our part an effort of readaptation and the acceptance of an attitude which will prepare us better to die. For Jung one of the great sources of the troubles of our day is that false morale which consists in trying to stay young when you no longer have enough physical strength left for it. We no longer know how to grow old, he laments.

The analogy drawn by Jung between the sun's course and the

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life of man is purely arbitrary and rests on no causal connection. If the night has such a profound effect upon our lives, it is because it reminds the unconscious of the conditions of uterine life. But man in his effort of adaptation draws farther and farther away from intra-uterine life, reacts against tendencies of return, and tries more and more to overcome the night. Already our cities have given up sleep and do their best to prolong the day artificially.

If death is not a biological process and already tends to be outworn, then old age is no longer a fatal biological necessity, and we must overcome that too. (*Calas discusses elsewhere recent investigations in biology which tend to show that death is not natural, but accidental in many lower organisms.—translator.*) Any process which moves us away from death cannot fail to be painful. But philogenically, such a process is progressive. Jung's theory, from the viewpoint of politics, can only serve reaction. When the lover-chief grows old he becomes a king. He will call upon an ethic of old age for the emotional aid he will then need. And therefore it is the duty of every conscious revolutionary to fight old age, to fight all forms of reaction, all reactionary manifestations of political and moral life and all reactionary interpretations of form or of matter.

Because we unconsciously suffer at the idea of having to forsake a world to which we are attached, because our attitude is algolagnic, even those who are most revolutionary among us have to be alert to avoid being carried away by the powerful currents which run counter to our conscious aspirations. We must keep in mind constantly that everything can be interpreted in terms of regression, fascism and death!

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Art Chronicle

Picasso: 4000 Years of His Art

A RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION usually provides the first clue to the scope and qualitative achievements of a contemporary artist. In certain cases it is astonishing how supposed aberrations can take on unexpected meanings, and in others qualities that had been considered stylistically brilliant plainly emerge as unfelt mannerisms. Perhaps the painter before us today is the only one alive who can survive a test that has diminished so many reputations. It can be recalled how no less an artist than Henri-Matisse became the victim of his limitations when his works were assembled into a comprehensive one-man show. One can even speculate as to whether the Van Gogh sensation would have scored so highly with the public had the Dutch painter's life been less dramatic and had he not had the advantage of being dead for fifty years.

At any rate, few will deny that Picasso survives this test at the Museum of Modern Art, and with a considerable margin to spare. The only painter of recent times whose survival can similarly be ascribed to esthetic grounds was Cézanne, whose memorial exhibition took place two years ago in Paris. It is regrettable that New York could not have witnessed this show. The careers of Cézanne and Picasso illustrate so concisely the cultural conditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The production of each artist would have been unthinkable in any period but his own. During the early years when he was producing relatively undistinguished impressionist painting, Cézanne had friends, acquaintances, and contacts with the art-world. Toward the middle of his life he retired to Aix and in semi-isolation maintained diminishing relations with contemporary culture; and his exhibition showed tellingly that it was not until then that his work began to live completely. Cézanne's progress toward realization was always in a direct line, with every picture a step toward a goal that seems never to have been quite attained, although many of the finest paintings of the nineteenth century lay strewn along the way. Furthermore it was not until the retrospective show that Cézanne's considerable virtuosity became fully apparent; in isolated examples it had tended to become obscured by a superficial clumsiness, derived from the fact that this virtuosity was directed exclusively toward plastic ends.

Picasso's career began just as Cézanne's was drawing to its close. The ruling society was not so sure of itself now; rebellion was in the air, and it was easy for Picasso to come in with the tide. He never had to work alone; he could profit by the experiments of others and take what he

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wanted; his natural feeling for style would illuminate anything that he touched and stamp it with the daring and brilliance of his personality. Cézanne had been unable to find himself until he was secure in the countryside he knew. Picasso's world, on the other hand, is deliberately de-localized. The national character, although it never loses an essentially Spanish flavor, is well behind the expression and never protrudes. Picasso could move as a man of the world, he could even maintain contact with artists in other fields who were congenial. And the twentieth century breadth of scholarship became one of the decisive influences upon Picasso's work and made possible his endless scope and variety. (It is interesting to speculate upon the effect which African sculpture might have exerted on Cézanne, who is said never to have seen a painting by El Greco, much less the emotional concentration of savage sculpture.) Picasso's work is rarely the interpretation of a locality and to an even less degree can it be called a direct expression of his time in the specific sense that Léger or the Constructivists express the twentieth century. At first glance his career seems a stream of disordered comments upon whatever may have struck his fancy throughout the whole history of art. The retrospective show has admirably clarified these tendencies and discloses the inevitability of their unexpected sequence. It demonstrates how the accelerated tempo of today has compressed a whole cultural cycle into a single life-time.

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The American art-critics have never betrayed their limitations more blatantly than in the handling of this exhibition. The majority confine themselves to a relisting of Picasso's periods, with occasional quotations from the catalog. No one seems to have perceived that the numerous stylistic changes are not "somersaults" at all but progressions toward an end. Without such an understanding Stravinsky's parallel development in music becomes equally confusing.

Picasso demonstrates consistently an unrelaxing effort toward controlling the most intense expression he can deliver. The means is relatively unimportant and he can adjust himself to any approach. His early paintings showed an expression that was thoroughly obvious, in a manner easily accessible at the time; in romantic colors he depicted people whom he had made expressive through mask and gesture. It was fortunate, perhaps, that he chose an approach which was plastically uncomplicated, as it is the enormous output of this period which built up the formidable Picasso technique. There has probably never been a painter so completely free in the handling of his medium; for it is only the supremely confident technician who can manipulate accidentals with assurance. In Picasso's work contours that slop over edges enhance the quality and make it live, while scattered drops of paint accentuate the seemingly effortless fervor; frequently one picture is painted over another, and if the under one shows through a little all the better; he can integrate it completely into the structural fabric. His tactile sense was very quick to develop; of all the Fauves' disciples none could emphasize form more delicately through shading, or

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swing the chiaroscuro more strikingly, than Picasso. In fact it was all too easy. As the output of the Blue and Rose periods became accelerated their purely external expressiveness became palpably thinner. The discovery of Negro sculpture with its fierce concentration of form and expression showed Picasso that he had been only scratching the surface of art. There was a new conflict with esthetics, and the resulting violence began in turn to break through the structure. The *Demoiselles d'Avignon* became confused in its thin washes of pink and blue against the dramatic distortions; the still-life objects at the bottom provide the most satisfying element in the picture. Cubism developed as the inevitable attempt to catch up from the other end; the external literary emotion was gradually relinquished until it fitted the new concentration of structure. Cézanne and Seurat had brought art up to this point from a different source; the Cubists re-affirmed the neo-Impressionist tradition, and for a time modern painting reached a sort of climax. Cubism moreover provided Picasso with an ideal field for the realization of his vast technical resources, which reached a new purity when removed from the cloying weight of picturesque over-meanings.

All this time Picasso had been doing minor representational pictures, usually drawings or small water-colors. About the year 1920 he felt that the architectural approach had become sufficiently absorbed and was ready to support new illustrative elements from the visual world. The results were the large classical figures, which were conceived with a monumentality and poise reminiscent of the old masters; but the concentration of the finest Cubist pictures began to diminish at once. Realism must be approached in some other way if it was to fit the abstract framework that had so recently delivered the deepest emotions of modern times. And with the emphasis on structure becoming secondary once more, Picasso's very direct method of applying the pigment began to turn to his disadvantage. He customarily mastered the elements as they took shape upon the canvas, and if there were some loose ends left over they had to fit in as best they could. This was all right when the parts were very simple, as in the Cubist *papier collés*, or fixed on flat planes as in the *Three Musicians*. But now he was dealing with human forms depicted realistically against a background, and in an effort to find some structural system that would hold he drew upon a host of different influences. The most diffuse and uneven production of Picasso's career had now begun. It is significant that the most distinguished results from this period are the still-lives; only the wonderful feeling for métier saved many pictures that were dangerously mannered. Paintings abounded in which the forward section would be executed in a smooth classical spirit against an impressionist background, and occasional surrealist yawps began to emerge from the débris.

The year 1931 marks the beginning of the latest Picasso era. As we have seen, in the preceding years the distortions and subjective emotional impact began to pierce the esthetic fabric, until it was obvious that the control and creative ingenuity were getting seriously out of line. No artist can run indefinitely on invention alone. At any rate, Picasso now made the

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final effort toward synthesis, and for his starting-point he went straight to the past-master of pictorial unity. His succeeding works were modelled upon—of all people—those of Henri-Matisse. Whatever the paintings of Matisse may say to the observer, their expression is always marvelously unified, and to achieve this very direct expression he had made his long effort to "think himself back to five years old." The flat patterns, derived from the Persian miniatures, are exactly right for odalisques, for flowers, for Riviera window-views. Picasso started with similar subjects and there was a long succession of ladies with mirrors and flowers. His lines now ceased their angularity; broad swinging curves enclosed bright garish areas, flat in color. There were no longer the delicate impressionist half-tones, everything has become full-spoken and direct; the tactile sense has diminished and with it went the mysterious Picasso quality. More recently the subjects expanded to include bulls and other literary symbols of horror and ferocity, the drawings began to show influences from Miró and Klee, and in 1937 came *Guernica*. *Guernica* remains the final attempt at synthesis. Picasso has gone back to the grisaille of Cubism. The dubious taste of the Matisse period subsides into black, white, and grey. There are striking passages, and the emotion fits the form completely, but unity of spirit cannot conceal disunity of structure. The picture shows obvious results of careful planning, yet the sections split awkwardly apart. There is none of the simple massing by which Seurat, Léger, or the Constructivists could hold a broad composition in control. Picasso wished to illustrate confusion, but the plastic arts seem to admit confusion only when the disordered parts are brought into some linear or patterned unity, as in Cubism the impressionist overtones used to bind the broken planes. Yet *Guernica*, as realism, projects what was intended; the facial expressions, the mood of horror and despair, carry realism to its highest pitch; and at this stage of social disintegration perhaps the greatest of modern painters can immerse himself in no more profound esthetic task than this.

GEORGE L. K. MORRIS

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London Letter

"History," so the saying goes, "never repeats itself." Nevertheless there will always be support for the I-Have-Been-Here-Before theory from others besides J. B. Priestley; and it is certain that to many of us the war so far is little more than a phoney echo, a dream flash-back, in which we seem to have jolted over the track and landed in the groove we ploughed twenty-five years ago. Of course, we tell ourselves, this is real. It is a new war. It may go on for years. But still the air of hallucination persists; the pattern is too familiar, too trite, to pass as new. We study the sequence of events, the official statements, the music-hall jokes and the popular songs, the moralising of intellectuals, the appeals to Justice and to God—and oh, yes, *yes*, without a doubt we Have Been HERE Before! As for those of us who are not beyond ripe military age, have we ever been anywhere else? Is not the complete war-cycle the one major public event that has dominated our lives?

If I look back to my earliest recollections I find these random things: the stoning of *dachshunds* in the streets, my brother and I searching for souvenir bits of shrapnel after an air-raid, my mother in a queue all morning for a few potatoes, a neighbour home with shell-shock crawling under our table and screaming during a night raid. And then the dazzling day when I was given money to buy a large flag for my bicycle, because the war was over and the Union Jack was the winner. From that moment we seemed to ignore the war for a time; perhaps it is because I was still a child, but the war certainly passed out of our consciousness until the debunking began. And then we became ashamed of our hatred, we questioned the reputations of generals and statesmen, we dwelt upon the horrors of war and denied the glories. The great reaction came, as it comes in the body after long tension and shock. If any one thing can stand as a symbol of that period it is Remarque's *All Quiet On The Western Front*. We read it, we saw it filmed, we made the title a catchword, and we began to feel that the ordinary simple German was just another decent chap like ourselves caught up in a universal madness.

Next to Remarque's book, in this museum of memories, I place the golden fountain-pen with which the Kellogg Pact was signed. We now had Mars by the short hairs. We outlawed War. We were never going to fall for that dope again. Pacifism appeared as a solid political movement, and the Peace Pledge was signed by millions with alacrity and contrition, in the manner of penitent boozers signing onto the water-wagon while the hang-over persists. History can scarcely show a greater orgy of good intentions than we had during that epoch of Conferences. We hunted the

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villainy on every occasion, until it became an impropriety to own a share in an armament factory. The crusade against the 'Merchants Of Death' was perhaps the climax. One remembers Mr. Roosevelt on the newsreel reciting his slogan—'America Hates War.' It was the only hatred we allowed ourselves, in those charitable days.

But why, in what should be a packet of 'news,' am I sending this cold slice off yesterday's meat? It is, as you will recognise, the intellectual background against which we—if we are on this side of forty—emerged. We went to school with war. It is the one subject we know perfectly. It is moreover the one disorder against which we have been powerfully vaccinated and dosed. We are, to borrow a Hollywood favourite, *allergic* to war. We know every inch of the road already, we have completed that particular round of illusion and disillusion. This, I believe, is the most important factor to be understood in the present situation here. Just as the body builds up resistances against a disease from which it has suffered, so the human psyche recoils from the repetition of an unpleasant experience which is still vivid in the memory. The emotions appropriate to a state of warfare are in varying degrees aborted in us. Accordingly we advance gingerly, keeping a sharp eye on that previous performance which so haunts us. We are going to respect the truly conscientious objector this time. Our bishops are more modest in their invitations to the Deity to take sides. We are guarding ourselves against indiscriminate hatred of all Germans. We are determined to love our enemies, and to hate only their faults and their Führer. We forbid profiteering. We are, in fact, re-enacting 1914-1918 on model lines, with all our original errors repaired. And even with such wholesale incorporation of all our idealisms, we still find it difficult to concentrate our full moral dynamic upon the prosecution of the war. There will be no Rupert Brooke this time; for this is the war that Nobody Loves, the mutual bluff that failed, the collision that both sides wanted to dodge.

And yet many of us can find compensations in it, for we are a singularly docile and adaptable people. After the disasters of peace, after unemployment and disenchantment, after the atrocity stories and the scrambling of war-correspondents to Spain, China, Abyssinia, it brings some relief—almost a slackening of tension—to get out of the diminishing audience and into the expanding scrum. The old ghosts of 1914-18 are familiar and comfortable, like a homecoming. We perfectly remember the songs, the slang, the jokes, the passwords to that Home from Home. And with it, no responsibilities of decision, no alternatives to consider, the warm comradeship of men in danger, the excitement of personal hazards. War at least is something that we can understand, its discomforts and tragedies have an air of reasonableness. Where it maims, it leaves behind it medals and the good respect of the neighbours. Unlike the privations of peace, it does not mock our intelligence. In that way some of us take to it as the more natural of two unnatural ways of life. And others have been willing to believe that a great argosy of good deeds has been cut off from

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us by Hitler and the unrest he has caused. These perhaps are our leading optimists, convinced that the destruction of Hitlerism will give us all the answers to the problems which confronted us when Hitler was merely a tub-thumper among twelve million or so unemployed in one of those unfortunate foreign countries. Having exported our sins, we now see new hope in the prospect of a final liquidation.

You will have the fragments of news, day by day as they happen, from professional observers. My purpose is to provide a framework of reference, a general perspective. I must try to give you some broad indication of our national situation. There is of course a widespread patriotism. Widows are contributing their mites, and men are volunteering their services. We are a people accustomed to war and we have our traditions. I can give you an imposing picture of England united against the enemy of civilization; I can also give you another picture of official muddles, of complaints and grumbles and scandals. Both pictures are true of any nation at war, and for that reason they have little exact value. Official England—politicians, industrialists, 'big shots' of every kind—is undoubtedly united and firm. The common man is more cautious and less given to high-falutin' sentiments. He certainly does not enjoy the prospect of going to fight, he is puzzled about Russia and our refusal to act against Russian aggression, and he is inclined to regard Poland as dead and buried. The Poles have not captured popular sentiment in the role of another 'gallant little Belgium'; our principal motivation is a hatred of Hitler as the arch-unsettler of political tranquillity. Popularly we fight to 'destroy Hitlerism,' and nobody knows or seems to care what we propose to do with Europe afterwards. Without passion, we drift into the war as a fatality, a kind of Act of God, to which we see no alternative. There is no popular anti-war movement; nor was there likely to be, because—as I wrote last time—we have a 'Right' Government recruiting us with 'Left' (i.e. anti-fascist) slogans.

All this is sharpened in our more articulate sections. The Socialists, in a fine muddle of misguggled idealisms, regard Poland as an outraged democracy, but feel that Russia has outwitted Hitler (without considering that Stalin may intend to disrupt the *whole* of Western Europe). The more alert 'Right' observers, who had hoped to push Hitler eastwards, do not fail to see that Stalin has reversed the process; and they are accordingly less enthusiastic about a war to destroy what had been—*faute de mieux*—a buffer against Soviet penetration. Our leftist intellectuals are drumming for a true and moral crusade on model lines, with the hope of provoking a German revolution before we are compelled to surrender too many of our domestic liberties. At a higher altitude, Federal Union and the Peace Pledge Union aim to make peace negotiations immediately practicable on terms that would eliminate future wars. And finally I must record a hope, uttered by a Cabinet Minister, for the restoration—oh, shades of 1918!—of the Hohenzollerns. With that in view, it is perhaps fortunate that we did not 'hang the Kaiser.' . . .

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And so the talking and the speculations go on. The truth is that we are all waiting for the war to take a decisive turn. An eventful day and an imaginative boldness might easily deflate it, since it is so reluctant to get under way. The air of hallucination persists, and subconsciously peace is still the greater reality.

I have not yet mentioned the younger intellectuals, those who might be described as the rebel generation. The communists among them have turned some somersaults over the Russian intervention, and the official Party has been so split that its leader, Harry Pollitt—who might be described as the only popularly known Communist—is now out of office. A lot of the 'promising young' are hastily inviting themselves to jobs in the Ministry of Information or anywhere else where they can exercise their genius without much danger. A further section, larger than I had expected and including some I had not anticipated, is 'boycotting' the war and preparing to face the Tribunals as conscientious objectors.

We hear that it is to be a good war for books. Compulsory black-out at sunset and restriction of public amusements are making a little boom for the book trade; but what is good for the sale and circulation of books may be bad for literature. The result so far has been depressing. *The Spectator*, for example, where normally one would expect to find a poem by Spender or Prokosch, has already debased itself to the level of

> "Across the garden of Europe
> An iron plough is drawn,
> Blotting in senseless ruin
> Pasture and path and lawn:
> Across the wells of Europe
> A bitter sea is loosed,
> Turning to brine, sour and malign,
> The waters that we used."

I quote this from a poem by R. C. K. Ensor, which I am preserving in my Chamber of Horrors to astound posterity; it contains, I think, every vulgarity, every technical abuse, every monstrous kind of ineptitude, that can possibly be exemplified in verse-form. Its appearance, except as a joke, in a weekly of high repute is a cheerless augury. It is the more serious because the specialised verse periodicals, and indeed all the 'little' reviews, are likely to be extinguished by the rising cost of paper. *Poetry (London)* is apparently dead already, after a short and flighty career. *New Verse* and *Twentieth Century Verse* are also reported as casualties, and at least one new enterprise has been abandoned on account of the war. The only encouraging news is the promised début, in December, of *Horizon* under the editorship of Cyril Connolly and Stephen Spender. Our other literary events are the publication of Dylan Thomas's *Map Of Love*, and the death of Ethel M. Dell. Dylan Thomas's book of poems and stories was submerged by the outbreak of war, but has contrived to bob

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up and attract attention. Mr. Thomas here appears in a *Stürm und Drang* portrait by Augustus John and lets off a fine salvo of poetic fireworks. Ethel M. Dell was the best seller of the last war and has for years been a household word as the 'greatest ever' of sob-stuff. Her skill in garnishing the stock plot of delayed rape had a touch of genius, and I am sure no contemporary literary critic has been able to avoid referring to her with some blend of condescension, envy and astonishment. She is to the gush-novel what Chaplin is to film-comedy, or Mistinguett to music-hall. Seen over the distance of a hundred years, her *Charles Rex* (with the hero and the heroine both pretending that she is a boy, so that he can whip her) should have such a revival as the surrealists have given to Mrs. Radcliffe.

And so goodbye to the little interregnum of peace. "Put away," as Pitt might have said, "those Genevan blue-prints of a new Europe. We can still get some sparks out of the old one." Bloomsbury's Brave New World is stored away in an air-raid shelter for the duration, and Uncle H. G. Wells is writing propaganda again and watching some more mechanical nightmares come true.

Shut down the lid. We are underground.

DESMOND HAWKINS

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Paris Letter

FRANCE IS IN the greatest confusion. We are at war yet war has not really begun. We are a democracy yet everything happens as if we lived under a military dictatorship. We are what are generally called "intellectuals" yet the normal exercise of our independent minds threatens to become a misdemeanor, a crime even, against "our fatherland."

Changes and paradoxes pile up around us. Jean Giraudoux, author of *There Will Be No Trojan War*, has become grand master of propaganda. You should hear him on the radio exhorting the men and women of France to unlimited confidence in the government and total abnegation for themselves. He declares moreover that "even in the conduct of the war Frenchmen are unlike other people, because they do not regard themselves as pawns in a game but as human beings." M. Giraudoux is right. In fact he cannot very well be wrong, for besides controlling propaganda he also censures the public's complaints. We agree with him that France as a whole is no "pawn" in the game of world politics; as for Frenchmen in particular, they too are quite free—free, that is, to applaud the speeches of M. Giraudoux.

Yet the censorship recently spent a bad quarter of an hour before an investigating committee of the Chamber. It had leaked out that certain fascist-minded officials were making rather too free with their privilege of ransacking mailboxes. M. Maurice Petsche himself was indignant at the startling results of his inquiry; and the government was advised to undertake certain "purges." Naturally the government is considerably embarrassed by the disclosures, for it has been engaged in a frantic repression against opponents of the war. These, of course, will simply be thrown into concentration camps (as in Germany!).

And to further complicate the situation, war cannot really be declared on Russia. Stalin is still regarded with some complacence by our friends Churchill and Chamberlain. The former said: "The vital interests of Russia follow the same direction as the interests of Great Britain and France." And Chamberlain: "It is too soon to pass final judgment on the causes or consequences of Russian intervention in Poland." And when the day following the "Red" invasion of Poland, M. Champetier de Ribes received the Soviet ambassador, our government—no pawn, remember, in the game of politics—was obliged to declare: "O yes indeed, M. Molotoff is an amiable man. He has had the courtesy to inform us that while violating the Polish frontier he remains neutral. For the present we can only record the event."

But certain Evil Spirits are to be found in the very midst of official

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circles; and these hold that France should treat the Soviet violation of territory with at least as much severity as the German violation. The more prudent diplomats, however, are always counting on a new turn by Stalin; and when challenged they reply: "Has Poland asked that we intervene to defend the Ukraine? No! And besides, has the Franco-Soviet pact been abrogated? No indeed!"

They are incorrigible!

And consider the almost insurmountable difficulty of the dual task imposed on M. Daladier. He must humor Stalin on one hand, and on the other hunt down the Stalinists. For the Stalinists do defend themselves; and in spite of everything their pacifist pretensions still find some response in the working class. This is all the more true because the reformist leaders, though anti-Stalinist, are patriots, and adhere to the famous theory, so dear to M. Jean Zyromski, of the "possible coincidence" between national and international duty. Actually such coincidence never exists for the workers, but exists all the time for the bourgeoisie; and that class is now profiting by the nationalist position held yesterday by the Stalinists with the purpose of disrupting the proletarian organizations. Only the social-revolutionists of the PSOP (Socialist Workers and Peasants Party) have maintained a correct line throughout. Anti-Stalinist from an international viewpoint, they too are tracked down, imprisoned, virtually driven underground. The future doubtless depends on their ability to seize control of the revolutionary vanguard from the Stalinists.

And while all this is being played out in the depths, our big intellectuals continue to disguise their bad logic in veils of rhetoric at five hundred francs a yard. That heroic old Academician Paul Valéry cooly defines a free country as "one in which war or peace cannot be the act of a single man." But why should not war and peace be decided by plebiscite? That would certainly be better. Yet if this were the definition of a free country there would not be many free countries. . . . Thus the whole Academy is mobilized to provide new definitions for old phenomena.

The radio, meanwhile, exhibits one after another all the celebrated French virtues: politeness, reasonableness, logic, chivalry. Gillet, Vallery-Radot, André Siegfried, and Francois Mauriac take turns at the microphone. And even André Gide retails lectures on "Shakespeare and Moliere," in the service of the entente cordiale. Obviously a literary subject can be approached from many angles. Then why not discuss "Kant and Descartes" or "Newton and Einstein"?

English at any rate is very much the fashion. People are learning it in order to talk with the Tommies and also to understand a little better, if possible, the soul of the great imperial sister across the Channel. Aristocratic ideas are also in vogue. A great deal of importance is being attached to the remarks of Prince Otto of Hapsburg, who recently talked with M. Benes and who, it appears, is "a very nice young man." Another object of current interest is the Reichswehr. On this subject we can't do better than cite one of the greatest, most profound, most French of all writers, Clément

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Vautel (of Belgian origin). To him the great "flaw" in the Hitlerian system, the rock on which it is sure to founder, is this: "The German generals, those proud and titled aristocrats, will not submit very long to the military domination of a corporal." A brilliant idea! So reassuring! But it does not quite satisfy our nationalist leaders. Merely to replace Hitler with some Prussian general is not enough for them. They intend to carve up Germany, install themselves on the Rhine, and annex Bavaria and the Rhineland to Austria. Such is the thesis developed in *Gringoire* by M. Recouly (formerly Ratmir, a spy in the service of Nicholas II, and biographer of Foch) and M. Maurras in *l'Action Francaise.*

If the totalitarian war permits, we have a few weeks respite. Meanwhile French propaganda expands and expands—towards what end nobody knows. The really essential thing is Unity—the Union of All Frenchmen. As a certain humorist once remarked: "You needn't know what you want but you've got to want it badly." And that's why Jacques Chadbourne, Roland Dorgelés (of *The Wooden Cross!*), Marcel Prévost, Jules Romains (of *Men of Good Will!*), and Romain Rolland (of *Above the Battle*!) become propagandists for the war. As for Rolland, it's a shame Molotoff was so clever. Otherwise Rolland might have executed his about-face on time, like Maurice Thorez, and re-issued today his books of 1914. But we may console ourselves for this loss by contemplating the works of art now being inspired by the warlike spirit, for example that extraordinary song, "They Shall Not Win," which M. Georges Thill, of the Opera, rendered a few weeks ago at an Artists Dinner presided over by M. Albert Sarraut.

Though the literary world is charged with patriotism, there are still a few pacifist die-hards who view the present war, like the last one, as just another settling of accounts between German and English imperialism. But these "individuals," as the press scornfully calls them, are all in prison. Among them is Jean Giono, whose attitude on the war is in complete harmony with the spirit of his books. If he has been unable to assimilate the new "definitions" and take his place among the slaves who sing hymns to "liberty," at least he has given us the simple and courageous example of a free man faithful to his principles—at once anti-fascist, anti-Stalinist and anti-war. For this triple crime French democracy, true to Valery's definition, has seen fit to shut him up.

CYPRIEN MORMICHE
GEORGES VIDAL

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BOOKS

FROM MARX TO DEWEY

JOHN DEWEY. By Sidney Hook. The John Day Co. $2.00.
THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY. Edited by P. A. Schilpp. Northwestern University. $4.00.

John Dewey is America's greatest philosopher. Appearing on his eightieth birthday, these books document the impact of his thought upon critics and disciples. Since the publication of his first paper in 1882, he has written enough on every branch of philosophy to make Sidney Hook's exposition a necessity. The Schilpp volume serves an equally valuable function. It contains a biography by Dewey's daughters, a series of critical essays by well-known contemporaries—notably Russell and Santayana —and finally a rebuttal by Dewey himself. This last is a vigorous reply to the opposition, in which Dewey practically punches his way through to a succinct statement on experience, knowledge, and value. Hook's "intellectual portrait" is more direct and systematic. Because of its unified character, and its author's well-earned reputation as a serious student of Marx, it provides an excellent touchstone for a discussion of Dewey as critic of modern culture. Hook's attempt at a fusion of Deweyan and Marxist politics is especially significant. It leads him to conclusions repudiated by both Dewey and Marxists. Two things become clear upon reading Hook's account. (1) He completely underestimates Dewey's opposition to Marxism. (2) Dewey's plea for a use of scientific method in politics cannot camouflage his failure to construct a scientific political program.

Dewey's greatest contribution, according to Hook, is his theory of inquiry. His central thesis is that ideas are plans of action, to be called true when they lead to the removal of doubt. Problem-solving, or inquiry, is what Dewey intends by 'thought.' Inquiry into inquiry is what he means by 'logic.' The latter determines the function of formal principles in inquiry, and describes the general pattern of thought. Such an investigation is wholly public; it involves no sawing open of heads to see what goes on inside. For Dewey holds that the notion of thought as an inside job is a sophisticated version of the split between theory and practice. When we inquire, we use our eyes, ears, and limbs; we also use language and instruments, and live with other people. Inquiry therefore, has a biological and cultural matrix. Within this context men set up what Dewey calls 'ends-in-view,' some of which they consider more valuable than others. To achieve these ends—one of which is socialism—they must be intelligent; they must conscientiously employ the accredited methods of science to check themselves along the way. This, in brief, is Dewey's contribution to our knowledge of human affairs.

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In the light of this accomplishment it is puzzling to read that "philosophy does not pretend to discover new truths about the nature of the world and man." (Sidney Hook, *John Dewey*, p. 40) For clearly, Dewey's theory of inquiry is a part of his philosophy, and I should think that Dewey, if not Hook, would maintain that it establishes truths about the nature of the world and man. It tells us how men solve their problems.

The philosopher's supposed inability to discover truth reappears, slightly blurred, in Hook's discussion of value. On the one hand he believes that the primary task of philosophy is evaluation. On the other, he sharply separates value-statements and statements of fact. Surely it is obvious that statements of ethics differ from those of the other natural sciences; difficulties arise only as to *how* they are said to differ. If I say "Socialism is desirable," or "You ought to fight against fascism," I am making a value-statement, but if I say "all bodies attract each other," I am not. Putting it in traditional jargon, in one case I speak about what *ought-to-be,* in the other about what *is*. Yet both these statements, though differing in this respect, have something crucial in common. Both of them can be confirmed or refuted, that is, subjected to inquiry. Such statements are often called 'confirmable.' There are, then, at least two kinds of confirmable statements, those of ethics, and those of the other empirical sciences. But 'confirmable' is frequently taken as synonymous with 'factual,' and so confusion occurs. For obviously when Hook divides value-statements and factual statements as mutually exclusive, people infer that value-statements are not confirmable. It follows that you cannot test or refute them. Surely this is not what Dewey intends; he does not reduce philosophy to a collection of tautologies, meaningless war-cries, and sage grunts.

On the contrary, he explicitly opposes this view, since he holds that philosophy is critique. To be a critic the philosopher must make value-judgments; he must examine the elements of modern culture and call them good or bad. But to do this intelligently he is forced to study the workings of capitalism, to engage in experimental social science. Dewey has never made such a study and so has never been able to present a concrete political program. This lack of leading principles may very well explain his spotty performance in practical politics. His successive support of Wilson, the World War, the League of Nations, and Al Smith, are evidence of the undirected character of his political thought.

Professors Randall and Hook have respectively attacked and justified Dewey's political negligence. Randall charges Dewey with a failure to deal with the central problem of modern culture. He says:

> "Instead of many fine generalities about 'the method of cooperative intelligence,' Dewey might well direct attention to this crucial problem of extending our political skill. For political skill can itself be taken as a technological problem to which inquiry can hope to bring an answer. It is obviously dependent on our acquiring the knowledge how to get men to apply the techniques already available for dealing with our social problems, how to enlist the cooperative

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> support of men in doing what we now know how to do. Thus by rights Dewey's philosophy should culminate in the earnest consideration of the social techniques for reorganizing beliefs and behavior—techniques very different from those dealing with natural materials. It should issue in a social engineering, in an applied science of political education—and not merely in the hope that some day we may develop one." (Schilpp, p. 91.)

But Hook would disarm all critics who, like Professor Randall, attack Dewey's failure to construct a political technology. He claims that "Wherever fundamental problems of evaluation are to be considered, there is the post for a philosopher, *not because he has the answers but because he has a critical theory of what constitutes a possible answer and why.*" (Italics mine. M. G. W.) (Ibid., p. 37.) We are led to believe that a philosopher has only to formulate a theory of the critical answer *in general,* but not to provide critical answers to our social problems. If this were the extent of a philosopher's job, it is obvious that he could finish it quickly by writing on the theory of inquiry, for that is where he would discuss the nature of problems and answers *in the abstract.* On this view, Dewey is not obliged to formulate a specific theory of social change, nor to take part in political action. He may rest upon the achievement of a definition of intelligence.

Such a conception of philosophy as mere proposal diverges sharply from the thesis of Marx to which Hook has also subscribed: "The philosophers have *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point however is to change it." For Marx, change was the order of the day, and philosophy was active, i.e., *revolutionary* critique. He conceived no sharp dualism between proposing a plan of action, and carrying it out; he built a social science to guide revolutionary action. It is difficult indeed to agree with Hook when he calls Dewey's *Liberalism and Social Action* "a book which may very well be to the twentieth century what Marx and Engel's *Communist Manifesto* was to the nineteenth." (Ibid., p. 158.) Marx and Engels in their book, were not content with urging the use of intelligence, they suggested a specific course of action. This "theory and practice of proletarian revolution," whatever one's estimate of it, was a program, in Dewey's language, an idea. It is the idea Prof. Hook has been talking about these many years. He has been one of the most brilliant students of Marx in America. His writings are evidence of his considered estimate of Marx's philosophical thought. In view of his study of Dewey and Marx, many had hoped he would discuss in detail his theories about the relations of instrumentalism to Marx's philosophy. But he hasn't. In this respect he is hardly alone, for of all the contributors to the Schilpp volume only Russell notes the closeness of Marx's comments on knowledge to pragmatism.

Although he omits comparison of Marx and Dewey on the nature of knowledge, Hook does compare their respective political and social thought. He describes Dewey as a democratic socialist and a Jeffersonian liberal. But, "leaving aside certain secondary differences of terminology,"

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it seems to him, "that, were realistic Marxists prepared to submit their methods of achieving *democratic* socialism to serious scientific criticism, and were Dewey prepared to work out a more detailed program of political action . . . their positions would converge on a set of common hypotheses leading to common activities." (Ibid., p. 174.) What sort of "serious scientific criticism" does Hook want Marxists to accept, and what sort of program can he expect Dewey to present? He has frequently urged the incompatibility of Marxism with *any* form of liberalism. (See, for instance, his *Meaning of Marx,* p. 131.) Although he evidently does not continue to believe this, he is certainly unclear as to what Dewey and Marxists must do to converge politically. Despite his harping on the fact that Dewey is not a pacifist, Dewey still regards intelligent action and force as mutually exclusive. If we recall that scientific method for Dewey is the method of intelligence, we know what Dewey will expect of Marxists. He will demand a surrender of the thesis that capitalism requires overthrow by force. Now Dewey's method of demanding this surrender is questionable. It begins by assigning to Marx a belief in the "dialectic inevitability of violence," and concludes with the obvious point that no empirical proposition is necessary.

Prof. Hook, who has so arduously defended Marx against metaphysical distortions, is, of course, extremely sensitive to unfair attacks upon him. And so he expresses Dewey's point differently. On his interpretation, Dewey entertains the Marxist hypothesis as an empirical prediction. Dewey realizes, he says, that it is a prediction to which Marxists themselves assign only a high probability, but goes on to disagree about the probabilities. That is, Dewey thinks it is highly probable that democratic socialism will be achieved by working within the present political framework, whereas Marxists believe Dewey's prediction has a low probability. In this way, Hook transfers the whole discussion into a scientific setting, in which nobody creates and later destroys straw necessitarians. But even if Dewey *did* carry on his argument in this manner, wouldn't the disagreement about empirical probabilities be enough to prevent the sort of partnership Hook suggests? How else do people who understand each other differ, if not on empirical grounds? Hook seems to take factual disagreements as unimportant in political theory, while on Dewey's view they are precisely what determine different courses of action. Exactly these empirical differences create the gulf between Marxism and liberalism which Hook has stressed so vigorously in other places.

If we turn to *Freedom and Culture,* one of Dewey's latest books, we see that he refuses to take part in common activity with Marxists, but that his rejection of Marxism is not made after a thorough examination of the weight of evidence. In a chapter entitled "Totalitarian Economics and Democracy," he presents his latest reflections on Marxism. The word "Marxism," of course, is ambiguous. It may refer to the theory and practice of Marx and Engels, or to that of their professed followers. No one has been more meticulous than Prof. Hook about this type of distinction. Indeed he has been vehement about the inadequacy of defining a com-

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munist as one who accepts the principles and tactics of the Third International. For, he has said, "to define Communism in terms of membership in a specific organization is as inadequate as to define Christianity in terms of membership in any particular church." (*Meaning of Marx*, p. 101.) This appeared originally in 1934. Let us compare it now with Hook's discussion of Dewey on Marxism in the latest book. In extenuation of Dewey's failure to study the works of Marx and Engels very carefully and his tendency to examine only their political disciples, Hook says: "Marxism for Dewey was what those who called themselves Marxists made of it; just as Marxists would say that Christianity is what those who call themselves Christians live by." (*John Dewey*, p. 162.) Presumably the type of definition that was inadequate in 1934 has become legitimate (on Marxian grounds!) in 1939.

But Hook's defense, which he makes at the pain of contradicting other things he has said, goes unheeded by Dewey in *Freedom and Culture*. Here, Dewey's attack is not along empirical lines, but on the contrary, raises almost every charge Hook has occupied himself with refuting. They are: (1) *Marxism was derived from Hegel's metaphysics.* This charge differs in no way from Bertrand Russell's ungrounded attack on Dewey because of Dewey's own debt to Hegel. Dewey justifiably attacks Russell's distortion, and for this reason it is astonishing that he should use the same type of argument against Marx. (2) *Marxism "was not derived nor supposed to be derived from study of historical events."* This is equally astonishing. As for Marx's generalizations not being derived from study of historical events, what significance does Dewey attach to the three volumes of *Capital*, and the historical treatments of the revolutions in France and Germany? And how can Dewey say that they were not *supposed* to be derived from a study of historical events in the light of Marx's completely empirical avowals in the *German Ideology* and throughout *Capital?* (3) *The generalizations of Marx are assigned "absolute necessity" and certainty.* This comment, of course, upsets Prof. Hook's placid picture of Dewey's criticism of Marx as simply based on a different estimate of the weight of evidence, and not on an unfair attribution of a belief in a priori necessity. (4) *Marx denied moving power to human valuations.* Here we need only cite Hook's thesis that Marxism is both practical and normative; that it makes statements in economics, and value-judgments, and that it does not *deduce* the latter from the former.

If to be a Marxist is to accept the tactics and principles that Hook credits Marx with, then surely Dewey is not a Marxist. And yet Hook maintains that Dewey and Marxists can take part in common political activities. But if Dewey, operating without the *theories* of Marx and Hook, is able to come to the same political activity, what special control over affairs do any of Marx's principles effect? What determines Hook's acceptance of them if Dewey is able to engage in the same political activity without their instrumental aid?

The discussion has been limited to the more immediate problems in

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Dewey's philosophy. A detailed examination of his tremendous contribution to logic and ethics has not been given. For this alone he must be regarded as America's greatest philosopher. My object has been to reveal what I regard as a serious lack in his thought as well as to question some of Prof. Hook's statements about his approach to Marxist politics. This, I hope, will not be taken as a denial of any of Dewey's contributions to other fields, nor of the fact that Prof. Hook's volume is the most valuable introduction to his philosophy we have.

M. G. WHITE

TOO WILD A COW FOR OUR MATADOR

D. H. LAWRENCE & SUSAN HIS COW. By William York Tyndall. Columbia University Press. $2.75.

For a long time there has been wanting a book on D. H. Lawrence which unlike most of those which have been published in English, tackled in a serious and thorough fashion the objective significance and importance of the man for our day. What is wanted is not a pseudo-psychoanalytic study, a la Middleton Murry, of how Lawrence got the way he was; this sort of thing, when done by some one we can trust and respect has its place and value, but neither place nor value can ever be more than secondary. What is wanted is an analysis of the objective content of Lawrence's attitudes and ideas and of their symptomatic significance; an elucidation of the sense in which Lawrence's "philosophy" is a turgid precipitate of powerful reagents which otherwise flow in solution in the current of our day.

The reason for the need of such a study is obvious. For men like Lawrence are extremely powerful amplifiers of forces which disturb us as much as they disturb them, but which disturb us only in the form of a diffused and vague irritation. But in order to tackle such a job certain qualifications are indispensable. And I might as well state bluntly that Mr. Tyndall seems to lack them all. Mr. Tyndall is not altogether unaware of what a critic could do with Lawrence; he does realize that Lawrence reflects his day and therefore it would be of great value to understand him. And this is a decided advance over most Lawrence criticism. But only a sense of what is required and some research on Lawrence's profuse intellectual borrowings is all we actually find in the book.

There are at least two reasons for Mr. Tyndall's failure, and one of these was already noticed in one of the reviews of the book which I read, namely his hatred of his subject. Lawrence seems to infuriate Mr. Tyndall even more than he does most of us. The reviewer who pointed this out argued, if I remember correctly, that this proves that it is impossible to write good criticism out of hatred. But this simply isn't so—as Nietzsche

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and Santayana, to take two random instances, demonstrate. It is impossible to write good criticism when the critic is not able to shoot his hatred through an intellectual projector of some power. In the absence of a powerful projector, instead of becoming a focussed light beam which reveals on the screen of his book the reasons why Lawrence is objectively irritating, Mr. Tyndall's hatred deploys itself in diffuse, picayune ridicule, and in somewhat obtuse malice. But there is nothing easier than poking fun at a man who takes himself as seriously as a stuffed owl. If it didn't reveal the pathetic need for love on the part of a heart that tolerated nothing but dominion over others, the famous Last Supper incident at the Cafe Royal would be a superbly funny story; just as the fulminations against his day would be ridiculous if they were not made by a man who, even as he made them, was impaled like one of Goya's figures, by his own frustrations. It is easy to appeal to the reader's feeling for smut—and who hasn't it?—by dropping insinuations in passing about Lawrence's homosexual tendencies; and easier still to show one's superior logical equipment by pointing out the contradictions in Lawrence. But it would have been more to the purpose, if a little more difficult, to disclose to the reader how these contradictions are mostly verbal, and how below them there is to be found an integrity of purpose and an emotional consistency which is seldom achieved even by the clearest and most logical of intellects. Had he noticed these, Mr. Tyndall could have made a point really worth making and far more damaging to Lawrence than those he makes, for Lawrence's consistency and integrity, being purely emotional, are the expression of an infantile will dominating one of the most perspicuous and powerful intellects of our day, to our own loss. Only an infantile genius could have been as thoroughly off and as silly as Lawrence could often be, and been, at the same time, as prescient of, as sensitive to, the illness of our age.

The second reason for Mr. Tyndall's failure is that in spite of his scholarship and a second hand erudition picked up from Lovejoy and other easy sources, he really lacks an adequate sense of his problem. Mr. Tyndall is inordinately vain about his scholarly discoveries, and tells us, with the self-gratulations of a little Jack Horner, the actual names of some of the books from which Lawrence made his profuse and erratic cribbings. Proficient at the graduate game of chasing up sources, when he gets at Lawrence's sources he has no more sense of what they import than he has of what Lawrence himself means. Having traced Lawrence to Blavatsky and Bessant, and revealed to us the ethnography and history Lawrence read, Mr. Tyndall thinks he has explained him. Whereas of course he has only pushed the problem one notch back and left it as much in the dark as it was before—unless one believes, as Mr. Tyndall seems to believe, that one has explained anti-intellectualism by calling it anti-intellectualism, proto-fascism, by calling it proto-fascism, and the revolt against the machine by telling us that the rebels do not like the machine.

There is a wide spread belief in Venezuela that wild cows are more dangerous to fight than wild bulls, for bulls, they say, close their eyes when

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they make for the cape and drive straight on ahead when you step aside, whereas cows make for you with open eyes and chase until they gore you. I believe that Susan had the best of the encounter with Mr. Tyndall. Let us send flowers to the matador with the hope for a speedy recovery and better luck at the next *corrida.*

ELISEO VIVAS

EPITAPH FOR LORCA

BLOOD WEDDING. Trans. by Gilbert Neiman. New Directions. $.50. *POEMS. Trans. by Stephen Spender and J. L. Gili. Selection and Introduction by R. M. Nadal. Oxford.* $2.

During the past two years there have been a number of tributes written to the memory of Federico Garcia Lorca. I believe the last, the final tribute is yet unwritten. There will be more to come, further evaluations of his work, further translations of his poems and perhaps the discovery of unpublished manuscript. From his death alone, as from a hidden grave where gold lies buried and where the smell of blood and distant sight of murder rise, there will be further controversies, assertions and denials and contradictions of so-called authenticated facts, and from the fragments of a story that makes a singular appeal to the romantic imagination, we shall witness the creation of a contemporary legend.

Even now, even at our short perspective of three years beyond his death, some serious attempt should be made to see two aspects of Lorca's reputation: one is the blood-stained Lorca myth itself, the figure of a poet killed while his country fought at civil war; the other is the scarcely less romantic imagery of the poetry that bears his name; and both creations are of memorable relevance to our world, now overshadowed by the threat of sudden death and recurrent war. Since Lorca's legend has been given greater prominence in America than a familiar knowledge of his poems, I shall allow it to speak first.

Late in the year of 1936 news of the Spanish civil war brought with it news of an irreplacable loss to European letters, the loss of a distinguished poet. In liberal weeklies his name was linked with the righteousness of aiding the Loyalist cause. The association of the poet and the cause then seemed fortuitous: his now famous *Llanto por Ignacio Sanches Mejias,* translated as "Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter" entered the same picture that already contained the figure of Mr. Ernest Hemingway as well as the title of a book called "Death in the Afternoon." With no less violence and with greater verbal confusion, since the poem was written in a foreign language, the legend bore something of the same character that was attached to Rupert Brooke's name in 1915. Here again the reader was confronted with the portrait of the poet as a martyr, the human sacrifice to

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war, and no little care was taken to present that portrait as evidence of a deliberated Fascist murder. Little time was lost in preparing the unseen corpse of the poet for public celebration in the name of Loyalist Spain. I quote from the preface of Mr. A. L. Lloyd's translation of Lorca's *Llanto por Ignacio Sanchez Mejias:*

> "Surely Lorca must have remembered this scene [a scene of a lamb being devoured by a family of black pigs] on that blazing day in August, 1936, when he, the finest and proudest poet in Spain, was dragged through the walled streets of Granada to face the Fascist firing squad."

Two brief years later than the publication date of Mr. Lloyd's translation, one may find in Mr. R. M. Nadal's introduction to the Spender-Gili translation of Lorca's Poems, the following paragraph:

> "In the first days of strife, some Falangistas, intimate friends and admirers of his work, invited him to their house as a protection against the possible excesses of the moment. Accounts received from trustworthy sources coincide in stating that, taking advantage of the temporary absence of his friends, an armed group whose political filiations, if any, cannot at present be established entered the house, dragged Lorca away and assassinated him brutally and cowardly in the outskirts of Granada."

Shall we conclude that Mr. Lloyd, like an overwrought journalist reporting the scene of murder, fixed guilt so as to make his story consistent with a preconceived editorial policy? Is Mr. Nadal pro-Fascist, pro-Anarchist or pro-Liberal in his convictions? These difficult questions cannot, of course, be answered without further knowledge of the true facts and their meaning, but the violence of the crime and the contradictions in the story of its action point toward the building of a strong and persistent legend. The true fable rising from the heat of conflict within the legend is the fable of the poet and his politically minded critics and editors. His first concern was a perception of reality however and wherever he may have found it, and their concern was the political use to which his poetry may be applied. Lorca's case recalls to mind the ancient story of the phoenix and his survival should be taken as a warning to those writers who expect non-political rewards for political action.

It has been generally conceded that Lorca's verse cannot be identified with the cause of either side in the Spanish civil war. Legend says, and here my authority is Mr. Nadal, that Lorca cut short all inquiries from both Left and Right by replying, "I am an anarchist, communist, libertarian, Catholic, traditionalist and monarchist." And legend continues, speaking of his love for Andalusian Spain, of his revival of its pastoral ballads, of his great confidence and delight in the Spanish language for its own sake, a charm so complete, so compelling that during his visit to New York in 1929, his ignorance of English was kept immobile and intact.

If his *Oda Al Rey De Harlem* and his *Oda A Whitman* seem to create a new perspective in our recognition of an American place and name, its

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detail in color and movement conveys something of the same incongruity, the same heat and tropic light that illuminated The Federal Theatre's production of a Negro "Macbeth." It is the far distance between the writer and his object that charms the reader. It is the proof that here was an Andalusian poet who saw the city and heard the name of Whitman.

We may be confident that legend speaks truly when it reminds us of his great promise in reviving poetic drama, and in *Bodas de Sangre,* the first of his three pastoral tragedies, one discovers the recurrent images of blood and the evocative power of "contagious magic" that seem to anticipate the violent story of his death.

Whatever we learn of his loyalty to his own heritage and to the imaginative resources of the Spanish language, all attempts to interpret it, or to associate his name with the cause of Loyalist Spain in terms of direct political action, seem false and fatuous. The publicity that attended the news of his death and the first publication of his poetry in England and America illustrates once more the obvious failure of political journalism to interpret literature.

If, as I believe, further translations of Lorca's poetry into English will be published in America, I also predict that a definitive or adequate translation of his work is an almost impossible task in the present generation. So far, the greatest service that his translators and editors have accomplished is the conscious effort to give the reader a literal translation of his work: the result, of course, is not poetry in English, and one is guided back to a reading of Lorca in Spanish. Mr. Lloyd's, Mr. Spender's and Mr. Neiman's English versions of Lorca's text point in the same direction and this direction is toward an unEnglish variety of prose and verse. Although brilliant flashes of Lorca's imagery emerge from the right hand page in English, there is nothing here to equal the felicity of Mr. T. S. Eliot's version of The Anabasis, or Messrs. Fitts and Fitzgerald's adaptation of Alcestis or Mr. MacNeice's brief experiment in conveying the spirit and temper of Horace's Ode I, Book 4. It would seem that the immediate pressure of events as well as the spectacular and inaccurately reported story of Lorca's death had forced the hand of his translators. Even the unaccounted for elisions in the Gili-Spender version of his "Poems" seem to bear marks of rushing manuscript to print as an overworked journalist might prepare his copy for the pre-midnight edition of a morning paper. The intense, and in some quarters, artificial heat of Lorca's legend has brought misfortune as well as fame to Lorca's poetry and at the present hour it will be difficult to find a poet whose particular insights and abilities are of a quality that recreates the verbal spirit of Lorca's felicitous imagination.

At the risk of making what may seem to be a tenuous and illogical analogy—since no two poets of like quality possess the same intentions and abilities—I would say that the promise of finding a translator for Lorca rests upon the unlikely appearance of someone whose work resembles the poetry of Mr. E. E. Cummings. Although the literal resemblance

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of Lorca's verse to Mr. Cummings's "Collected Poems" is extremely slight, the imagination of both poets are of the same world that includes the names of Ernst and Dali, Picasso, Stein and Cocteau. In the work of both poets the same double exposure of childhood and death crosses the range of human vision and behind it is contained the same rare knowledge and creation of the poetic conceit and all that such a rarity implies. But beyond this point of contact their roads are as far apart as the two languages in which their poetry has gained a highly individual distinction; and the contrasts in their intentions, technics, meanings and perceptions are clearly marked by the contrasts of "Him" and *Bodas de Sangre.*

In fairness to the present translators of Lorca's verse, one should remark that however awkward their English script may seem to readers of poetry in English, they have not vulgarized the intentions of Lorca's poetry. A recent anthology of Spanish civil war verse, published in the now defeated cause of aiding Loyalist Spain, was by no means as scrupulous in keeping clear of vulgarized distortions of the Spanish text and its meaning. The book is now most happily forgotten.

Meanwhile the cycles of Lorca's reputation have just begun. Beyond the complex, growing myth of Lorca's legend in Granada, and through the darkness of the present European war, we shall yet find time to re-discover the reality that was both his unique perception and the voice of young men facing death in the continued crisis between two wars:

la muerte le ha cubierto de palidos azufres
y le ha puesto cabeza de oscuro minotauro.

These two lines contained within his memorable *Llanto Por Ignacio Sanchez Mejias* should be reserved for his own epitaph.

HORACE GREGORY

"FATHER MOYLAN'S" YOUNG THUGS

TOMMY GALLAGHER'S CRUSADE. By James Farrell. Vanguard. $1.00.

We do not need James Farrell's own word for it that his "usable past" lies in the tradition of realism and naturalism. The body of his work bears testimony to the fact. This pamphlet—for it can scarcely be described as a story—is a realistic account of a brief period in the life of a young Irish-American who falls a victim to the propaganda of "Father Moylan." It is rather entertaining to read the prefatory statement to the effect that "all the characters in this book are fictitious, and if the names of any actual persons occur, it is by sheer and unintentional coincidence." The author might better have written: All the names in this book are fictitious, but if the recital of any actual events occurs, it is entirely intentional. The only difference between Father Moylan and Father Coughlin is a few letters in their names, and the description of the Moylan meetings, the parade of Moylan's followers in front of the radio station that denies him time on

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the air, the brushes on the street where "Christian Justice" is being sold, all might have been taken from a reporter's notes.

In spite of its verisimilitude, however, the book wants cogency. It is too reportorial. It may be that the method which works in a long novel is inadequate to a short story; there is insufficient piling up of detail, and so the power that comes of sheer mass is lacking. Tommy is plausible but not wholly convincing, partly because the author has not space in which to build him up. The background against which he is drawn, that of a decent lower middle-class home, offers a contrast to Tommy's unattractive personality but fails to explain his maladjustment. The final paragraph, with Tommy lying awake beside his likable brother Bill, "thinking of his hatreds, vowing over and over again to himself that his day was coming, and assuring himself that when it did come, it would be a day of vengeance" is one of the few impressive passages. It ends ominously with Tommy's self-regarding hope: "Look at Hitler in Germany! Hitler had known days like this, too." America has all too many Tommy Gallaghers, but there are probably few of them who come from such a comfortable setting as Tommy's. The warning is needed, but it is doubtful if it will be heeded. The book is not likely to convince the Tommy Gallaghers that they are on the wrong road, nor is it forcible enough to strengthen the hands of their opponents.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

SOUVARINE ON STALIN

STALIN. By Boris Souvarine. Alliance. $3.75.

Boris Souvarine's *Stalin* is a monumental work. Despite the incredible difficulties involved in reconstructing the life of a man who has used a colossal state power to obliterate all documents, rewrite or falsify all historical records, and "liquidate" all living repositories of knowledge concerning him, Souvarine has succeeded in giving the reader a rich, many-sided and dependable picture of his enigmatic protagonist. Unfortunately, the American publishers have done the work less than justice by omitting all bibliographical notes; and even the original French edition makes the mistake of not citing sources for each controversial statement, not indicating which are hostile, which friendly, nor at which particular juncture a quoted authority made such and such statements. Yet, within the text itself there is enough evidence of careful research to give a convincing picture and one which is self-consistent throughout a big work, and consistent with all the available evidence.

What the biography may lack on the personal side—Stalin's private life, his relations with women, his habits in food and drink and speech and meditation, matters that the evidence does not cover and that are besides of secondary importance in so public a character—it more than

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makes up for by its vivid picture of its anti-hero as politician, leader and ruler.

Those who, like the present reviewer, have known Stalin personally will recognize in this work a true portrait, and those who have known him only through the extravagancies of official Stalinist hagiography or bitter and unthoughtful denunciation, will for the first time understand the man in the setting of his country, his time and the movement that has shaped and been shaped by him. And that, after all, is the main requirement of a public man's biography.

The book is more than just a "life"; it is at the same time a picture and analysis of the decay and degeneration of the Soviet State and the Russian Revolution. Here the details and evidence are piled up in such selective profusion that it automatically becomes the best source book so far written for an understanding of what has happened and is happening in the Soviet Union.

The author traces the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, as nearly as I can summarize so rich a material in brief compass, along the following lines:

1. The program and organization of the Bolshevik party arose from the fusion of an imported, readymade European Marxist doctrine with a specifically Russian conception of the professional revolutionary, the disciplined army and the authoritative leader.

2. Lenin was brilliant enough, humane, self-critical and flexible enough to make his leadership on the whole salutary, but when he was wrong, ill, or in exile and cut off from communication, the party was apt to be wrong and incapable of sound self-orientation. Little deficiencies in his leadership were adopted and enlarged by his successors who lacked his restraining and offsetting positive qualifications.

3. Lenin never forgot that democracy was inseparable from socialism. But under the stress of the hard conditions of civil war and a world of enemies, under the conditions of a ruined and backward land and an uncultured, unnumerous and exhausted proletariat, and faced with the inability to win the support of or work with other parties, the Bolsheviks drifted during the course of the revolution into a dictatorship of a single party. Followed the destruction first of the soviets and soviet democracy, then increasingly of party democracy. This led—to some extent even while Lenin was alive and against his desire and sporadic resistance—to the systematization, codification and permanence of measures originally regarded as exceptional and intended only to meet a temporary emergency. In time the "temporary state of emergency" became the permanent atmosphere of the Soviet dictatorship.

4. Lenin's program was more suited than that of any of his rivals for the ending of Russia's ruinous participation in the war, for the seizure of power, and for the solution of the hardly soluble problems of wartime Russia. But the program was based upon a false calculation as to the situation in Western Europe and the tempo of world revolution. Whether

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Lenin, had he lived and retained his authority over the party, would have been able to rectify its course to meet the problems of a Russian revolution that failed to spread into a world revolution, and whether he would have been able to combat and correct the regime of "permanent emergency" —Souvarine seems unable to quite make up his mind.

5. That none of the other leaders was capable of doing so or even sufficiently conscious of the problems involved, Souvarine has no doubt. Stalin defeated his various rivals for the succession because they were less thoroughly than he an expression of Russia's backwardness and of the newly developing bureaucratic interests, because they were less capable than he in the obscure maneuvers required in a struggle which Souvarine regards as not ideological in its essence but personal. Trotsky, his most dangerous, popular and capable rival, was defeated because he did not know how to organize a faction, did not know when to strike and when to withhold, and because he himself justified and tended to enlarge the evil aspects of Leninism which Stalin was developing from little flaws into an entire system—the dictatorship of the party over the masses and the leaders over the party, the theory of blind party loyalty and military discipline, the tendency to discredit and annihilate proponents rather than to consider and refute propositions, the use of military measures in the organization of Russian economy and industrialization, and the cult of infallibility. None of the oppositions, with the possible exception of the early Workers Opposition and Democratic Centralist Opposition, ever dreamed of opposing or protesting against the measures used until their own fate was involved, and even then tended to confirm the principle while protesting against its application to their own faction. Under these circumstances, the most ruthless and consistent and unadulterated embodiment of this evil side of Bolshevism was the inevitable victor.

6. The whole course of development after Lenin's death, and perhaps —Souvarine seems undecided on this score—the whole course of development since Kronstadt, is one of growing counter-revolution. Milestones are the political defeats of Trotsky in 1923, of Zinoviev in 1925, of the Zinoviev-Trotsky bloc in 1927, of Bukharin in 1929, then the ruthless attack on the masses in the course of forced industrialization and collectivization of agriculture, the attack on science, art, culture, thought and elementary decency in the Stalin apotheosis, the development of a counter-revolutionary foreign policy, and the blood purge.

7. The direction of this counter-revolutionary development is towards a growing resumption of the age-old evils of Russian tsarist autocracy, complicated and enlarged by a vile use of revolutionary demagogy and by the employment of unprecedented instruments for the control of economic, political and cultural life: the radio, a one-hundred percent controlled totalitarian press and publishing apparatus, a complete control over the movements of 150,000,000 people, and the conviction carried by the modern tank, bombing plane, machine gun, dictaphone, job-control, and other devices not available to previous despotisms. The Soviet Union is still in

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transition but is developing into a totalitarian, bureaucratic slave-state with a ruling group not exactly comparable to the class or caste of earlier societies, something historically new in which all traces of workers state and socialism have been eliminated or turned into their opposites, into instruments of oppression, terrorization, corruption of the few and exploitation of the many.

The two successive collapses of the world revolutionary movement within an interval of less than a generation; the slow, then more rapid, and at last landslide decay of the first great experiment in working class rule; the simultaneous visible breakdown of the old social order and ever more visible degeneration of the first efforts at the construction of the new, oblige us to test all theories, question all dogmas, challenge all infallibilities, reexamine all problems in the light of what has happened and what is even now happening. Souvarine's book does much to clear away old rubbish which obstructs the painful and urgent task of reconstruction. If it has a fault, it is rather that it clears away too much—even stout beams and solid foundations that might be used in the new edifice. Yet the service it performs is a sanative one, and so necessary that it is better to clear away too much, as it seems to me Souvarine does, than to attempt to rescue and utilize rotten timbers or faulty structures and incorporate them into that which must so largely be built anew.

Only at the end of his work does Souvarine seem to become conscious of the larger problems involved, and then he raises them in the following indecisive terms:

> "The force of things and the behavior of men have contradicted all Lenin's optimistic forecasts, his hopes in a superior democracy as much as his semi-libertarian ideas. . . . Nothing in the individual theses of Trotsky has stood the test any better. . . . Lenin died too soon to write the epilogue to the miscarriage of Bolshevism. Trotsky has not availed himself of the leisure afforded by exile to make a true and conscientious examination . . . his articles and pamphlets vainly paraphrase a hackneyed argument without throwing light on a single problem. The miscarriage of Bolshevism in Russia coupled with the irremediable failure of the International, and the lessons of experience, go far beyond the sphere of civil war. . . . The death agony of socialist hope in the world thus opens up an immeasurable ideological crisis. It will be the part of the epigones of a powerless generation to make out the balance-sheet of national Bolshevism, of international communism and of traditional socialism. . . . And this should logically lead them to examine what is still alive and what is dead in the parent doctrine, Marxism."

Thus the work closes with a question mark, to which it suggests no answer. Naturally, we cannot count it as a deficiency of a book which sets out to be a biography that it does not undertake this overpowering task. But when it also calls itself "A Critical Survey of Bolshevism," then we have some reason to expect that the author should outline, at least for

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himself, the main lines of the answer so that he can use it as an implicit and consistent criterion throughout the work. But evidence is lacking that there is any such viewpoint underlying the approach to the events and problems here touched upon. It is characteristic that the author now borrows Lenin's outlook, now Trotsky's, now Luxemburg's, now Martov's, even Masaryk's. He has seen the structure of his own views crumble into ruins but has not succeeded in the subjective reconstruction which is a prerequisite for full usefulness in undertaking the collective task of rebuilding the revolutionary movement and the socialist system of thought. He is too informed to let his disillusion with the Russian Revolution restore an impossible faith in decaying capitalism. His strength is in negation—a significant task—for the rest he wrings his hands and laments at the ruin and the waste places he has helped to clear.

However, he has done a mighty job of clearing. Those undertaking the tasks he but indicates will be deeply grateful for this book. Those who spurn it because it leaves certain big questions unanswered or calls in question things they would rather see untouched, can avail little in finding the answers Souvarine has failed to find.

BERTRAM D. WOLFE

LETTERS

SURREALIST PROTEST

Sirs:

Louise Bogan's article, "The Poetry of Paul Eluard," seems, to us, transparently composed of the opinions of a literary snob, insufficiently inducted into the furnaces of modern esthetic experience. A glaring clue to the rigid pattern of misunderstanding which Miss Bogan has managed to make seem so slight is the factual inaccuracy: ". . . that he (Eluard) has never rebelled against Breton's manifestoes and excommunications." This may be consistent with Miss Bogan's general portrait of Eluard's ideological (and weak) acquiescence, but, as everyone knows, the F.I.A.R.I. manifesto did ruin the intellectual partnership. . . . And there is the anti-climax of Miss Bogan's article: "That Eluard's gifts should have been forced, by the fashion or neurosis of his period, to disguise themselves as 'unconscious' (so that their true imaginative flights will not lie open to scorn) and be reduced to the level of a word game is peculiar enough." The "forced disguise" of Eluard's gifts is a clean donation of Miss Bogan. Some may love Miss B.'s superb journalistic ease in regard to all this fol-de-rol and sickness of Surrealism. It is neat to say that the typical surrealist is the "rage-type," namely the professional sick man. We do not say this analysis of Miss B.'s is morbid, but we say it may well be. Yet it does seem completely irresponsible to the legitimate psychological assumptions of a given art movement (Surrealism) in the same way that professional neurologists depredate society in search of "perverted" artists.

Miss Bogan is apparently unaware of the danger of soberly invoking old-fashioned outcries against the inexorably advancing footstep of esthetic revelation. Let us come out and say that to pose the situation of Eluard as the true imagination somehow wriggling away from the false is a slander on the slippery back of Surrealism. Surrealism is not defined by a parlor game, a set of rules, or a psychotic type. Surrealism exploits these

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things. Surrealism is a technique for sanctifying the unsanctified; a technique for everything of which Eluard is capable, as he would be the first to admit. Does Miss Bogan deny that the Surrealist face of rage is fundamentally human and poetic and static only as a statue is? Then she is putting her arm through the man of art and knifing him from behind. She is making fun of a protean manifestation of the human, the discipline of the Surrealist. Eluard has been at the lips, the nipples and the sex of Surrealism. Now let someone persuade him to deny it.

Miss Bogan is fantastic indeed to call upon the "future critics and diagnosticians of the era," who will smile that Eluard's gifts "have been made to function under manifestoes, literary and otherwise"; fantastic and canny. It is an invitation to the many to stand aside from the imprisonment in the rock of the age, a lure to the fundamentally unimaginative and aggressively inane to be sane. Surrealism, precisely, is the insight of the lyric man, the man of immediate and insatiable esthetic satisfactions, into the concrete clothes of the modern psyche. Certainly the astute of any space-timed region will be able to see, praying at the pap of this mother of the imagination, the eloquent and pathetic figure of Paul Eluard.

CHARLES HENRI FORD,
PARKER TYLER,
Norwalk, Conn.

MISS BOGAN REPLIES

Sirs:

I knew that there had been a break between Eluard and Breton, after the F.I.A.R.I. manifesto. Eluard, faced with a choice between following Breton into a less rigid doctrine (as it now applies to the artist), chose to remain in the more rigid one: Stalin Communism. In other words, Eluard did not rebel against Breton; Breton rebelled against Eluard, or, at least, against the Communism which Eluard continued to cling to.

The term "rage-type" was not applied to "the typical surrealist"; I wrote that many surrealists were rage-types. The term "rage-type" is a technical one, denoting a sub-type of paranoia, and therefore cannot be defined widely as "the professional sick man," and I nowhere so defined it. (Dali is proud to refer to his painting as "paranoiac"; is this "morbid" of Dali?—) And may I say, in passing, that any "professional neurologist" who set out to "depredate society in search of 'perverted' artists" would remain a professional neurologist for less than a week? Messrs. Tyler and Ford overestimate the range of neurology. It is rather a limited branch of medicine, on the whole.

It would be interesting if Surrealism were further examined and defined, by unbiased heretics. In some ways it is extraordinarily like the Gothic schools which sprang up in the late-18th, early 19th centuries. Perhaps Messrs. Ford and Tyler could trace down, even though they are far from heretical, the relationship between Dali and Strawberry Hill; between Surrealist writing and Vathek and The Castle of Otranto. It would be a pity if Surrealism turned out to be the Gothic of our time, and was not recognized as such on the spot.

LOUISE BOGAN,
New York City.

MORE ON MUCKRAKING

Sirs:

In a letter to the writer, Mr. Louis Filler, author of *Crusaders for American Liberalism*, a recently published study of the muckraking period of American magazine journalism, agrees in general with my article in the last PARTISAN REVIEW, but rises to defend the idealism and courage of the early muckrakers—a point which I would readily grant. Says Mr. Filler:

. . . "Even among the magazine publishers, consider Ben Hampton. Hampton was a former advertiser with American Tobacco. He took the *Broadway Magazine* (12,000 circulation), and in three years ran it up to 480,000—among other things, cracking down on General Electric and the Sugar Trust, joining in the Ballinger fight, which broke the Taft administration, etc. He was warned that if he published in *Hampton's* an exposé of

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the New York, New Haven & Hartford by Charles Edward Russell (spies in his offices learned of the article), he would be smashed. He published 'The Surrender of New England,' and after fighting Wall Street for about half a year was bankrupt, and the magazine ruined. 480,000 circulation!

"Didn't the serious muckrakers take great chances, and wasn't it because of public support that they escaped ruin? Wasn't their success a measure of the strength of the reform movement?

"Tom Lawson, for example, was not even a journalist. When he declared war on Standard Oil, he was worth some 50 million dollars. In other words, he turned on his class. He died in 1925, worth nothing. (No tears necessary: he enjoyed life all the way—but does 'The Wolf of Wall Street' adequately characterize him?)

"All the muckrakers had to be careful not to make a factual mistake in their articles, beware of assassination, avoid being decoyed into scandal (e.g., with women) by trust agents. David Graham Phillips was so successfully calumniated that there is a general impression that he was a shallow sensation-monger. The facts are overwhelmingly the other way. Russell was reputed so radical that he could publish consistently in only three magazines *during the muckraking era.* (*Success, Hampton's, Cosmopolitan.*)

"Obviously, men like Russell, Phillips and Hampton could have taken it easier —even been liberal, without subjecting themselves to the kind of opposition they met. It was often less troublesome to be a devout Socialist than a militant muckraker. . . ."

Mr. Filler calls attention to the strength of the labor movement during the muckraking period, and to the face that "the muckrakers were not clearly marked from the labor movement. They were uniformly pro-labor, many ardently so. Their articles were often published in the labor and Socialist press. And, of course, many of them were, or became, Socialists, before the World War scattered them."

I thought your readers would be interested in these comments by Mr. Filler.

Sincerely,
JAMES RORTY,
Flatbrookville, N. J.

NOTE FROM KAY BOYLE

Sirs:

I was rather surprised on looking through this number (Fall 1939) of PARTISAN to find my name signed to a protest against the "dance of war in which Wall Street joins with the Roosevelt administration." Also, am I a member of "The League for Cultural Freedom and Socialism"? I did not know this before. I did, some time in August, sign my name to a manifesto which was in spirit similar to Breton's, but as the war had not then been declared in Europe it is patently impossible that I signed the document which you publish in this issue. You have perhaps felt that in changing the letter of the manifesto or protest that you did not alter the general spirit of the thing, but you, to my mind, have narrowed the issue down to precisely one point, and that point my opinion was not asked on before my name was included in the list at the foot of page 126. What my opinion is, is of no importance here; I wish merely to state that I think it a most questionable policy to place anybody's signature after a document which he has not had the opportunity to read.

My husband and I have been both very much interested in your article "The War of the Neutrals." It is exceedingly clear and good. Louise Bogan's translations of Eluard's poems I find very awkward. It is too bad she sacrificed so much to an almost lame precision—and that she sacrificed precision sufficiently to translate "demain" as "today." It must be obvious to even the most elemental student of the language that the last line on page 87 should read: "Which tomorrow will roll on gold." Eluard is now mobilized, with that other good poet Jacques Baron, and is checking up army supplies, as you probably know.

Yours sincerely,
KAY BOYLE,
Megève, France.

As secretary of the League for Cultural Freedom and Socialism, I wish to express my regrets to Miss Boyle. I did assume that she would go along with the war statement since she signed our earlier general manifesto of common political aims. In signing this manifesto, by the way, Miss Boyle became a member of the League.—DWIGHT MACDONALD.

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JAMES, WHITMAN & SEMANTICS

Sirs:

In part II of your symposium on "The Situation in American Writing," Robert Fitzgerald expressed himself vigorously, and also made some significant statements, concerning the nature of your questions. His answers revealed an awareness of and ability to control the techniques of semantic analysis which for a literary man (I am not being patronizing) is very wonderful. His analysis of your first question, however, is based on an apparent misconception of the nature of meaningful statement. His technique is simply to relate the sign with its reference, leaving out the indispensable element of context. Mr. Fitzgerald's whole notion of a "leading" question which is ambiguous, the unconsidered conclusion of his analysis, can be derived only from such a method.

Concretely, his method is to examine each phrase in your question separately. He is able thus to show that the phrase in question is possibly ambiguous; he does not show thereby, as he claims, that your whole question is ambiguous, or that it is not a question. The title of the symposium, the whole series of phrases which precedes or follows the particular phrase he selects, give a significant meaning to each included phrase. This is the context you have provided your questions, and the fact that Mr. Fitzgerald, despite his distinctions, is able to answer each of them to the point shows that their meaning is clear. To demand more of questions, especially those formulated for a general symposium, is semantic faddism. What Mr. Fitzgerald is finally saying is that your phrases are ambiguous because he can provide them with other contexts of his own. Which is hardly apropos.

An example of Mr. Fitzgerald's confusion of contexts, and its sorry consequences, is his reply to your James-Whitman question: "I'm damn well tired of hearing the two of them built up into Antithetical Forces in American literature. That isn't what they wrote for; it certainly isn't what they wrote *as*." In this case, Mr. Fitzgerald's substitution of his own context for that given not only shifts the meaning but alters the whole direction of the question. He substitutes, in fact, two separate and different questions, one of which is a question for psychoanalysis, and the second of which is based on neglect of historical facts. I do not pretend to know what James or Whitman wrote for; what they wrote *as* is a question easily answered from their writings.

Whitman's poems reveal obviously that he was writing as the Voice of the People, the poet *en masse* calling upon America to beget its future poets in his image. James wrote the bulk of his later work as spokesman to a small select audience, and his early critical work also calls for a New American Writer, but one of quite different shape from Whitman (as a study of his work or of Cornelia Kelley's *The Early Development of Henry James* clearly reveals). That the two men have historically pointed different directions to American writers is, despite Mr. Fitzgerald's petulance, undeniable. That they were themselves conscious of these differences, and regarded themselves *as* Antithetical Forces, is further attested by James's sarcastic paper on "Mr. Walt Whitman" and Whitman's statement, pregnant with relevant meanings: "James is just feathers to me" (in Traubel's *With Walt Whitman in Camden*).

Mr. Fitzgerald, surely, had better reconsider his methods both of semantic and historical analysis.

Sincerely,

DANIEL LERNER,
Manhattan Beach, N. Y.

IN BRIEF

Sirs:

I have just received the Fall issue of PARTISAN REVIEW. I have had time to read only the Interview with Silone, a few of the poems, some of the answers to your questionnaire on American writing, and the letters and communications. It is inexpressibly heartening, in these grim days, to find a publication which speaks so clearly for what Silone calls "real freedom," for intellectual integrity, for the humane values by which alone we can go on living. Some of the writing in PARTISAN REVIEW shines like a good deed in a naughty world.

Faithfully yours,

BABETTE DEUTSCH,
New York City.

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Sirs:

I like the idea of publishing every two months instead of quarterly—also the reduction in price. There is no magazine quite like PARTISAN REVIEW on the market to my knowledge, and the more often it is published—at the same high standard, of course, which is very high!—the better. My renewal subscription will follow in a few days.

Very truly yours,
ARTHUR BLAIR,
Pittsburg, Kansas.

. . . . . .

Sirs:

I was a bit doubtful whether I should be able to renew my subscription. Everything is so unsettled, and I wasn't sure if I should be staying on in Ireland. Of course, we're neutral here, but nobody seems yet to have quite decided who we're going to be neutral against. In these days with so many English and French publications ceasing or prostituting themselves, one is more in need of P. R. than ever. I'm sorry to see the line the *New Republic* is taking. You want to be a bit nearer to England to understand what she's fighting for!

Wishing you every luck,
DUBLINER.

. . . . . .

Sirs:

I read your sample copy, but I am opposed to all you stand for. That is, Trotskyism, Judaism, Romanism, capitalism, Nazism, Fascism, reactionarism of all kinds. I consider the above constitutes most of our cannibalism. Russia is trying to rid the country of them all. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin bitterly opposed the *principles underlying* them all.

Mr. Webb and his wife seem to me to be the *fairest* historians and writers about Russia of today. Communism a *new civilization*. One country prohibiting robbery, exploitation, graft, rich *parasites* whether labor aristocrats or not. Labor aristocrats are not tolerated any more than the exploiters. This is as it should be. In this country the *labor aristocrats* are our worst cannibals and reactionaries. Religion and Fascism come next (Big Business exploiters). Yours very truly,

W. THEO WOODWARD,
De Land, Florida.

To Our Readers: We will pay fifty cents each for copies of the following issues of Partisan Review: December 1937, January 1938, July 1938. Send us any such copies and we will remit money on receipt. This offer subject to later withdrawal. The Editors

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First Will & Testament

a book of poems by

KENNETH PATCHEN

about which WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS *writes:*

"Love is Kenneth Patchen's great theme, divine and human, and, unwinking, what our life has done to it. To this he brings a structural design filling the page at its best for what he wants to say—scattered, jagged, irregular, with long explanatory titles—burdened with uncertainty.

"Critically speaking a poet's structural devices reveal not only his competence as a poet but his intentions. Seek there.

"The object is brutal and public. Stop or be stopped by the red signal at 52nd St. and Broadway going west just after sundown and you will see! aside from the buildings with their tops blown off, nothing whatever! no one thing to penetrate the encased mind, but a whole, startling to the attention:

"An eviscerated woman whose jeweled guts fallen out, sparkling with garish splendor, cars drag wildly up and down the avenue while over them her eyes and scattered hair, the rounds of her pale breasts and buttocks spattered with blood hover tormented and obscene.

"I have said Patchen resembles John Donne. But there is a university of disaster to love between them. Alike in inmost reverence both are explicit in their poetic form. Donne behind bars, shaking them, remains confined to bespeak his disaster. Patchen in his day, to shouts in his ears also no doubt of, Order, order, order! rising angrily about him, builds upon the structure of love divine and human but after a different pattern.

"Does anyone forget that St. Bartholemew's Eve was also a call to order?

"Order, order, order? *What other order can there be but this:* to embrace the poem in its own construction and follow through unrestrictedly to a conclusion, stopping at nothing, clipping nowhere but blasting aside restraints to the full and present revelation. To discover love's full reaches and its own ways.

"And so I reach the extraordinary conclusion that the structure of Kenneth Patchen's poetry is the exact revelation of his love, the attempt to stretch arms about the difficult object—to hold it close and protected within his own warm embrace."

—WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

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THE KENYON REVIEW

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A typical issue is that for Winter, 1940, which includes:

Articles: *Henry Adams: Three Late Moments,* by R. P. Blackmur; *Andre Malraux: The Return of the Hero,* by Haakon M. Chevalier; *The Changing Ethos of Contemporary Music,* by Henry Woodward; *Obscurity and Dylan Thomas,* by Julian Symons; *The Pragmatics of Art,* by John Crowe Ransom; *Emily Dickinson's Prose: A Note,* by Milton Hindus.

Verse: *For Sigmund Freud,* by W. H. Auden; *The Paradox in the Circle,* by Theodore Spencer; *Variations on a Summer Day,* by Wallace Stevens.

Reviews: By Lionel Trilling, Robert Morss Lovett, John Gould Fletcher, Jerome Mellquist, Samuel Rogers, Eliseo Vivas, Philip Timberlake, Joseph Sagmaster, Winfield Townley Scott, Philip Blair Rice; *Music Chronicle,* by Paul Rosenfeld.

The feature of the Autumn issue, 1939 (Vol. 1, No. 4) was a Symposium on *The Present State of Poetry:* "(I) In England," by Herbert Read; "(II) In France," by Justin O'Brien; "(III) In the United States," by Robert Penn Warren.

Editor,
JOHN CROWE RANSOM

Managing Editor,
PHILIP BLAIR RICE

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THE KENYON REVIEW
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